OUR

CHURCH MUSIC.

A BOOK

For Pastors and People:

BY

RICHARD STORRS WILLIS.

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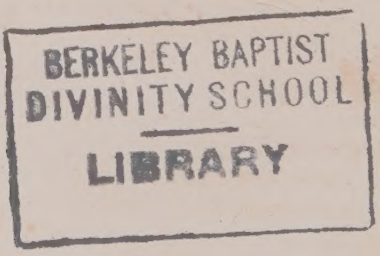

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CONTENTS.

PART I.

		PAGE.
CHAP. I.	How our Church Music goes on	1
II.	A Chapter to the Clergy	11
III.	Church Music a Three-Fold System	16
IV.	Can we Worship by a Choir	21
V.	A Sunday in a German Church	30
VI.	Children's Music in Churches	34
VII.	The Position of Choirs and Organs	38

PART II.

CHAP. VIII.	Our Psalms and Hymns	61
IX.	Comments	81
X.	Wedding Music to Verse	88
XI.	On the Treatment of Words	102
XII.	Mutilation of Hymns	108
XIII.	Musical Rhetoric	117
XIV.	Secular Effects in Church Music	126

a. The Sentimental, Languishing Effect

b. The Dance Effect.

c. The Rub-a-Dub Effect.

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OUR CHURCH MUSIC.

CHAPTER I.

HOW OUR CHURCH MUSIC GOES ON.

It is Sunday morning. We are near a place of worship: let us enter. The assembled people are just engaging in an act of divine homage—a song of praise has been announced, and the music is arising. In what words is this act of homage embodied?—

"Great God! how infinite art Thou!
What worthless worms are we!
Let the whole race of Adam bow
And pay their praise to Thee.

Thy throne eternal ages stood,
Ere seas or stars were made:
Thou art the ever-living God,
Were all the nations dead.

Our lives through varied scenes are drawn,
And vexed with trifling cares,
While Thine eternal thought moves on
Thine undisturbed affairs.

Great God! how infinite art Thou!
What worthless worms are we:
Let the whole race of creatures bow
And pay their praise to Thee."

WHAT THE MINISTER IS DOING.

Seated in his pulpit—(it is customary, here, for clergyman and people at this moment to be seated)—he is turning over the leaves of his sermon. He is thinking, perhaps, that it is too long: he will curtail here, and condense there. A felicitous thought suddenly strikes him—he is hastily interlining it with his pencil. Now he is gazing dreamily about the church. Of what is he thinking? Perhaps, that the congregation is very thin to-day—he misses certain of his parishioners. Perhaps, that a child is to be baptized; Have the baptismal party arrived in church? Perhaps, that among the notices to be read, a certain committee-meeting has been forgotten; he must wink the nearest church-officer up in the pulpit to him, to have that matter decided. Or, he suddenly observes that the light is not right, and the sun will soon be pouring in upon him through yonder gallery window. Now, therefore, he is standing a hymn-book in a certain position on the pulpit, as a private signal to the sexton.

Of such matters may, or may not, the good minister be thinking. I hope we do him no wrong; but he is certainly not engaged in rendering homage to his Maker. For, with the simple announcement of the song of praise, his duty seems to have ended; and there is now a short intermezzo, for him to attend to certain little matters of his own, and of the church generally. The act of worship an-

nounced, then, apparently not concerning him, has probable reference to the congregation.

WHAT THE CONGREGATION ARE DOING.

Comfortably seated, in erect and easy attitude, they appear not unlike to people in a concert-room—there is a performance of music going on, and they are listening. Or, perhaps otherwise. Napoleon was very fond of attending musical performances, not for the music, but because it afforded him such an excellent opportunity of thinking of something else. While the melody pleasantly employed his ear, his mind could be occupied with some of his stupendous military designs. And thus, in the present instance, the congregation may successfully be thinking of something else. And of what?—how can we possibly know? The merchant may be musing, perhaps, on the present state of trade—the broker on the condition of stocks—the lawyer on the suit which commences upon the morrow.

The gentle fair also of the congregation, have, doubtless, their own characteristic thoughts. By strong force of association—the music, pleasant people around them, tasteful attire—there may be many of them, for the moment, in a concert-room. The peculiar style of the choir-music may possibly assist this delusion. And, judging from those observant and scrutinizing glances, it were not surprising if the thoughts of the gentle wives and daughters were just now *somewhat* tinged with cherry-colored ribbons, as contrasting, perhaps, with the chaster effect of a purple style of trimming.

Let us be just. Here and there is a quiet, retiring figure, apparently absorbed in the act of devotion, and lowly and sweetly singing the praise of her Maker—a true worshipper. Some such worshippers, in every church, undoubtedly there are.

With such occasional exceptions, however, the act of worship seems, after all, not to concern the congregation. Then, it must concern the choir.

WHAT THE CHOIR ARE DOING.

They are *performing* the act of devotion, which, it is understood, is to be engaged in by other people—inasmuch as the music is such as to absorb, for itself alone, their entire attention. Sharps and accidentals, generally, are imminent, and must be sharp-ly looked after. One of the basses sees an ominous flat coming, which he is troubled in mind about. Perhaps he secretly resolves to ignore it altogether: he can overleap it, and fairly reach the *terra firma* of the note beyond. A tenor singer sees a passage in the prospect that lies just in his voice: upon this he is preparing to display himself, and make the auditors for the moment aware that there is a tenor singer in the choir. A contralto is regarding with trepidation a duet approaching, which she is to sing alone with the first soprano.

From this it would appear, after all, that the act of worship cannot concern even the choir. Then it certainly must concern the organist.

WHAT THE ORGANIST IS DOING.

What has an organist (in the present style of Church Music) *not* to do? He must read the music before him, and follow the words in the hymn-book by the side of the music. One hand is on the swell organ; another on the choir organ. With one foot he presses the swell pedal; with the other foot he points the pedal bass. One glance must control the row of registers on his right; another, that on his left. With one ear he must listen to the quality and volume of tone he is producing; with the other, he must be careful to adapt this volume to the voices, and to keep choir and organ together. With the rest of his mind, then, still unemployed, he is, it is supposed, to engage in the act of devotion.

We cannot but fear, then, that this devotional act cannot even concern the organist. There are only two persons yet in the Church—we must fall back upon the sexton and the organ-blower. But the organ-blower has the treacherous lead before him to watch, and the frequent changes in the organ's volume, to produce great artistic effects, seriously affect the wind; the tell-tale, consequently, has to be closely watched.

WHAT THE SEXTON IS DOING.

The sexton, if possessing those qualifications which are presumed in sextons, is necessarily an ubiquitous and generally-useful person until the sermon commences. He must conduct late strangers, like ourselves, to their seats; he must attend to the furnaces or stoves; he must keep

the doors shut; he must attend to the ventilation and the light; he must have an eye to the clergyman, who may need his services; he must be ready to call out the upcoming doctor of the congregation for a real (perhaps an imaginary) patient;—he must do a great many useful things incumbent on a sexton. How can even *he* have been referred to by the clergyman on announcing the act of worship?

Who, then, are the worshippers here? Clergyman, congregation, choir, organist, all seem to evade the supposition. But stay—does it concern *us?*

WHAT WE ARE DOING.

We are observing whether others worship—when we ought to be doing something better. Our motive, at the moment, may not be a bad one: but still—we are not worshipping.

From all of this we are constrained to think, then, that when the clergyman read those lines of the foregoing hymn—

> *Let the whole race of creatures bow*
> *And pay their praise to Thee,*

that he meant, first, not that the creatures addressed should literally bow, or assume, in any manner, a respectful and deferential attitude, but—quietly remain seated. And, second, that not the "whole race of creatures" should engage in this act of homage, but just as many as chose, or whomever in the congregation it might haply concern to attend to this matter.

Therefore, this general act of worship announced, resolves itself into that of the optional, scattering few, whom we have observed, here and there, engaged in their devotions.

* * * * * * * *

Now, if the picture, thus presented, of our American churches when the music is going on, be overdrawn, the just reader will of course modify it, or reject it. If it be true, his own judgment will best suggest what application to make of it.

If such, however, to any extent, be the present state of our Church Music, then there would really seem to be something radically wrong in the matter. Either words do not mean what they seem to mean, and a hymn which reads like a direct and continuous appeal to the Supreme Being, is not the solemn prayer which, in other cases, we should certainly think it:—or, our hymns are mere forms of words for musical expression and effect; chiefly useful in articulating the music, like the *la, la* of a solfeggio exercise:—or, there is some grand misapprehension as to the signification of the term worship, as applied when *not* referring to music; as involving an act of intelligent homage on the part of each individual—not a vague any one, or no one of the congregation: an act which has a beginning, a continuation, an end: just like any other deliberate act; just like a prayer.

It is certainly not for me, or any other individual, to say what the music of the Church shall positively signify, any further than the words themselves, which are put into my mouth and the mouths of others, shall define and determine this signification. But these words, in most instances, as in the familiar hymn quoted, imply actual wor-

ship. Worship, then—I am justified in supposing—is the meaning of the music in such instances. But, is it viewed, or at all acted upon, as worship?

Now, if music *can* be beautifully wedded to worship, it seems desirable to know it; and how it can be done. If it cannot, it is equally well to know it, in order that whatever we do, we do intelligently.

The nature of worship, I have taken occasion in the ensuing pages early to consider, as lying at the foundation of our subject. Before passing to this, however, and other kindred topics, it may serve a good purpose to present the reverse of the picture just drawn, in a church otherwise engaged in its Sunday music. Perhaps an imaginary church; perhaps, in certain particulars, one discoverable often enough, to render it of possible presentment in the churchly world.

WHAT THE CLERGYMAN IS DOING.

He is standing, book in hand, intently absorbed in the music-prayer now arising to heaven. Perhaps he is even singing! His impressive example of, at least, *spiritual* participation in the act of worship, *would* effectively impress the congregation—if they were not, just now, attending to something better.

WHAT THE CONGREGATION ARE DOING.

Conscious of the august Presence they have just invoked, they are on their feet. Having invoked this Presence, they do not stand mute and silent there, as though

the invocation were entirely without purpose: but each, for himself, is quietly hymning his praise to the Almighty; or confessing his delinquencies, or soliciting forgiveness. There is not much noise—why should there be?—but a solemn musical murmur is spreading through the congregation, and filling the house. None present are listening to the effect of congregational singing to see how they like it. The congregation are not worshipping God for the effect of it—no one is asked or expected to listen, or see how they like it. Each is supposed to participate in it. If not vocally, from real, or only supposed incompetency, at least spiritually.

There are, therefore, no lawyers; no merchants; no physicians; no fashionable women, as such; and no clergymen, at this moment in the house—or persons whose thoughts are running in this direction. They are all worshippers; and paying their homage to heaven from one common level of devotion.

WHAT THE CHOIR ARE DOING.

The choir is at this moment identical with the congregation. There is no choir—they are all worshippers. No longer engrossed with the difficulties of musical execution, no longer excited by the ambition of musical display, they are momentarily at rest, in the sacred calm of devotion.

WHAT THE ORGANIST IS DOING.

The music is so simple and so well-known, that hands and feet move instinctively through the accustomed paths of

harmony as through musical pleasure-grounds; which are so familiar that he could move even in darkness, and lay his hand upon every flower. The book is open before him; his eyes are on the words; he is singing as well as playing;—the organist is also a worshipper.

WHAT THE SEXTON IS DOING.

Midway in some duty he is arrested by this musical act of devotion, as by a prayer. He is leaning on a pew, near the door: the hymn and music are familiar to him since his childhood, and—there is no longer a sexton. He is one of the congregation, and also a worshipper. Even the organ-blower finds that the steady flow of the music requires not that his entire attention should be fixed upon the rise and fall of the lead, and he is receiving, at least, a solemn musical impression.

WHAT WE ARE DOING.

Still observing whether others worship! Let us stop, and participate in the closing stanza of the hymn, while there is yet time for us to speed one devotional thought to heaven.

CHAPTER II.

TO THE CLERGY.

In Germany there is said to have existed an old churchly ordinance, that the candidate for orders should pass his examination in Church Music as well as theology. It was expected of him that he should be able, at least, to play and sing the familiar chorals of the Church. And, certainly, in our day, the least that can be expected of clergymen is—that they be intelligently informed on the subject of Church Music: so much so, as to secure its proper application in Divine Service. For it should be borne in mind, that one-half of the actual worship of the Christian Church is embodied in music. For this reason, it is surely a great defect in our present theological system, that no definite provision is made for the due instruction of students on this subject—both theoretically, as to the exact object of sacred music, and the best method of applying it to the purpose intended; and practically, as to actual vocal culture and practice. A twofold object would thus be gained. Teach students to sing well, and to use their voices effectively in music, and you impart to them a similar power in the sister art of declamation. Music and oratory are closely allied. The Greek orators, who had a flute-player stationed behind them, to the tones of whose

instrument they modulated their voices, seem to have had some just surmise of the close relation of music to oratory.

Music is the most subtle and powerful collateral influence connected with church service. It appeals to the heart of man—to his emotional nature. It has the same silent aim, therefore, as religion. Of what importance, then, that the feelings be rightly appealed to through this fascinating instrumentality. The music of church service can signally aid or signally thwart the clergyman. In voluntary, and interlude and hymn, it can prove a musical shower, to soften and open the heart to impression; or it can chill and fritter away every hallowed feeling. An after-sermon hymn, or an after-service organ performance, from its inappropriateness, has often proved a veritable musical east-wind—dispersing and obliterating those delicate germs which a celestial Hand, during moments of silent devotion, or the good seedsman of the pulpit, had let fall upon the sensitive soil of the heart.

Clergymen are apt to think that the music of the church is a matter which does not concern them—that it is an affair of the music-committee and the musical forces in the gallery. Moreover, from the sensitive nature of musical people, and the occasionally awkward experiences of clergymen with choirs, they have begun to regard it as a *noli-me-tangere* kind of subject, and, on the whole, best let alone. This is surely a mistake. Clergymen can properly be excluded, or excused from nothing which involves such serious interests as Church Music.

It must be granted, however, that a certain difficulty presents itself to the clergy in deciding precisely how far their jurisdiction in this matter extends; for possessing,

generally, little knowledge of musical matters *per se*, they feel some natural hesitation in interfering with them.

Now, the musical jurisdiction of clergymen in churches, it strikes me, is not a difficult matter to define, if we regard it from the right point of view:—and it may be well, here, to give this subject a moment's attention.

All Church Music, it is understood, is subservient to what is assumed to be the great object of church service—worship. Now, the true nature of worship, the general principles which underlie it, and the best method of successfully accomplishing it, ought to be, and doubtless are, better understood by the clergyman than the musician: inasmuch as the one makes this his special study, and the other makes music his special study.

The intellectual and defining part of the musical department in churches belongs, then, to the clergyman: the practical and applying part to the artist.

In other words, to the clergyman, as the spiritual guide of the church it appertains, to decide, what musical arrangement is best for the spiritual interests of the church; and to the musician it appertains to realize this arrangement.

Such being the case, it is a matter, for instance, of the clergyman's decision (in connection, if you will, with the music-committee) what style of music shall be employed —whether congregational, or choir, or both: how much music there shall be, and where introduced: whether there shall be a voluntary before and after the service, or whether there shall be none:—because all these matters are questions of *intellectual* decision, (as connected with the general subject of church service,) and not questions of

merely *musical* decision. For the same reason, the question of interludes between the verses of hymns would be a matter of clerical or churchly decision: whether they should be introduced at all: whether, if introduced, they should be short or long:—because here, again, is involved a question of interrupting the sense of the hymn, when that hymn expresses, perhaps, a consecutive act of worship: this is a question, concerning which the clergyman and the church, generally, are as competent to form an opinion as the artist: even more so, because music is generally so absorbing as to exclude such considerations from the artist's mind.

On the other hand, the artist has his own sphere—an art-sphere—into which neither clergyman nor people have any right to intrude. For instance, the question of a voluntary being decided, and its length, if you will—whether five minutes or ten—no one has a right to dictate what the quality or style of that voluntary shall be. If the musical taste of the artist do not suit the society, let them dismiss him, and get another: he is master in his own field, and is right in rebelling against all dictation as to the manner of managing an organ. When a society engage an artist they run this musical risk. And thus, after the number of hymns is decided, (if this be not decided by the form of service,) the number of verses to be sung, and where the hymns are to be introduced, no one has a right to dictate what music shall be sung, or how it shall be sung. Here, again, the artist is master in his own field. The only proper redress for dissatisfaction is dismissal. Again, the question of interludes being decided—how many and of what length; whether to equal

one line of the hymn or two lines—the quality and style of these interludes are solely at the discretion of the artist; and he may stun with sub-bass: he may torture with fancy-stops: he may rattle on without the slightest reference to the sense of the preceding or succeeding verse, and no one in the church has any official right to interfere. If the music-committee have hired so crude an organist, it devolves upon them and the society patiently to bear with the same, until they can procure a better.

Such, then, it strikes me, is the proper manner of viewing this subject, and of defining the jurisdiction of the non-musical authorities of the church. And it is as well to have this subject understood; for nothing, perhaps, has been the cause of so much dissonant feeling in the church as the church's *harmony*—generally arising from trespass on the one part or the other. When the time comes, that the pulpit and the organ are, literally, brought nearer each other, and the worship of the church proceeds entirely from the clerical end of the edifice, (a subject which is to be considered hereafter,) we may hope that the antagonism and too frequent conflict of these two churchly forces (like two opposite points of polarity)—will cease altogether.

* * * * * * * * *

I would not, by the preceding remarks intimate, that organists or leaders of choirs may never pleasantly be conferred with, as to the style of music in a church, or the manner of managing an organ. Organists, themselves, often wish to gain the opinions of others on these matters. I would only guard against anything like dictation, or active interference in an Art, best understood by those who profess it.

CHAPTER III.

CHURCH MUSIC A THREE-FOLD SYSTEM.

In reviewing the history of Church Music, we find that, during the various ages of the Church, three distinct styles have gradually been developed: that peculiar to the clergy; that peculiar to the choir; that peculiar to the people. Church Music, in its completeness, would combine, in my view, these three features—clergy, choir, people.

MUSIC OF THE PEOPLE.

This is the oldest style of music in the Christian Church. During the first three hundred years after Christ there was no other: the singing of the early Christians was wholly congregational. Shortly subsequent to the year 300, the first change occurred; that of responsive singing.* "This mode of singing was first practised in the Syrian Churches; about the middle of the fourth century it was introduced by Flavian and Diodorus into the Eastern

* For the historical information given in this chapter, I am indebted to Mr. Coleman's work on the Primitive Church: a volume embodying the results of much study by the author on this and kindred subjects, while resident in Germany: the book being endorsed, as to accuracy, by the celebrated Neander.

Churches;* thence transferred, in the year 370, to the Western Churches by Ambrose, and soon came into general use under the name of the Ambrosian style of music.† As this responsive singing was performed by the people, the music still retained its congregational character.

Congregational singing is still heard, to a certain extent, in the modern Church—as we find to a limited degree both in England and the United States: particularly in Germany, however, where, both in the Romish and Protestant Church, the singing of hymns is left to the people.

MUSIC OF THE CHOIR.

Choir music was introduced into the Church in the fourth century. "At this time a distinct class of persons was appointed to take charge of this part of religious worship. But the people continued, for a century or more, to enjoy in some measure their ancient privilege of singing together: joining occasionally in the chorus, and singing the responses."

Until this period no instruments had been used in the Christian Church: (in the ancient Jewish Church, as in the idol-worship of the Greek Church, the voices were always accompanied with instruments.) But now, instrumental accompaniments were gradually introduced into the Apostolic Church. "They can hardly be assigned to a period earlier than the 5th and 6th centuries. Organs

* Theodoret, Eccl. Hist. Lib. 2, c. 19, p. 662.

† August. Confess. 9, c. 7. Paulini, Vet. Ambros, p. 4. Comp. Augusti, Denkwürdig. 5, p. 300.

were unknown in the Church until the 8th or 9th century Previous to this, they had their place in the theatre rather than the church. They were never regarded with favor in the Eastern Church, and were vehemently opposed in many places in the West. In Scotland we find no organ to this day, except in Episcopal churches. In the English Convocation, held A. D. 1562, in Queen Elizabeth's time, for settling of the liturgy, the retaining of organs was carried only by a casting vote."

The choir and the organ, then, as we now see them, may be assigned to the 8th or 9th century.

MUSIC OF THE CLERGY

"The clergy eventually claimed the right of performing sacred music as a privilege exclusively their own." Thus, from the people, it would seem, Church Music passed first to certain appointed officers of the church; and from them to the clergy; and, the more effectually to exclude the people from any participation in this exercise, the singing was now in Latin.

This entire monopoly of the music by the clergy continued until the era of the Reformation, when Luther restored, as the sacramental cup to the mouth, so music to the lips of the people. During all the cultivation of sacred musical art which has since taken place in aesthetic Germany, no effort has been made to wrest the mass-choral from the people, or to refine upon its rude grandeur. But, however exquisite the choir music, as sometimes heard in

larger German cities, the singing, in their place, of devotional hymns by the people, is never interfered with.

With the music of the clergy we are, in the United States, but little acquainted. In the Romish Church, here as elsewhere, the priest intones part of the service. In the Jewish Church, priest and people alternate. In the Lutheran Church, the clergyman occasionally chants the Lord's Prayer, or impressively sings the benediction. Clerical music is also occasionally heard in the English cathedral service, a part of which is intoned by the clergyman.

Church Music, in its complete embodiment, then, of clergy, choir and people, is to be found perhaps, in modern days, chiefly in Germany only : and even here to a very small extent. In the modern Church we have, for the most part, the exclusive institution of the choir.

It is quite time that our imperfect musical system were extended beyond this. With the clergy as musical auxiliaries in religious service we cannot do much, until the tongues of students in theological seminaries are loosed to sing the praises of their Maker. This has been done to considerable extent in New-York : and the clergy have occasionally, at Trinity Church, sustained an independent musical part in the regular service of the Church. Indeed, the Episcopal Service is so arranged, that we might easily secure the three musical features mentioned, of clergy, choir and people.

But, in any event, to every religious service ought, forthwith, to be added the mass-singing of the people. Congregational song is the proper basis of all Church Music ; and for this, provision, in all cases, should first be made.

Upon this basis an artistic style of music may well be reared, as superstructure, if deemed advisable. But while the latter is dispensable, the former I cannot but regard as indispensable, if music be viewed as a *devotional* exercise in our service. The grounds upon which this opinion is based, will be found in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

CAN WE WORSHIP BY A CHOIR?

Choir music represents an ornamental, or impressive style of church song—congregational singing a devotional.

This distinction I do not regard as at all arbitrary, but as founded in the nature of what we term—worship. This term it will be necessary, at the outset, to define;—a task which would much better be performed by the venerated teachers of the sacred desk, than by any mere lay-thinker. But it will be absolutely necessary, here, to undertake some definition, in order to gain any standpoint for future argument and remark.

The general use of the term *worship* is somewhat extended and vague. A definition of the word, as given by various persons, would probably differ very much in its degree of limitation. To my own mind, worship implies an intelligent *act*. The nature of this act may best be expressed by the general term—homage. An act of homage may be rendered audibly and visibly, as accompanied by the voice and a corresponding posture of the body; or, it may be rendered silently and invisibly, as un-

accompanied by either voice or significant outward posture.

Homage is rendered the Supreme Being in PRAISE—in CONFESSION—in PETITION: also, as I conceive, in DEVOUT MEDITATION on the divine works and attributes, or on one's own spiritual relations to his Maker: for, herein is a recognition of God, which is homage: and the homage we pay a divine Being is of a quality necessarily involving worship. Worship, in its truest and highest sense, however, is when the soul ascends to the immediate presence of its God, and there pays him intelligent homage. It may be for a moment, like the upward glancing of a reverent thought from the crowded street of a city; or it may be for an hour, in solemn interview with the great Father.

It follows, then, that hearing a choir sing—is not worship. Reading the hymn through in a merely intellectual attention to the thought—is not worship. A solemn feeling—is not worship. Such a feeling is often the result of architectural or artistic causes. A person, for instance, has entered a cathedral. He is awed by the grandeur and solemn hush of the place. He yields to an irresistible feeling of solemnity, and afterward goes away and feels, perhaps, as though he had worshipped. Not so. He has merely indulged in what might be called *architectural awe*. Such a feeling is a legitimate effect of elevated art. But this is not worship. The place and the supreme Object of worship lie higher than mere architecture, or music, or sculpture, or painting, artistically enjoyed, bear the soul. For, in the enjoyment of art, as in the enjoy-

ment of natural scenery, we are recipients; the mind, therefore, is in a passive state. Whereas, in worship, the mind is in an active state. We must rise *through* nature to nature's God: and, in sacred art, unless the soul be impelled forward one step further, to definite religious action, it is not in a condition of worship. For no passive state, no condition of mere feeling can involve this. Worship involves an act. Feeling may, and should, accompany this act, but cannot constitute it. And in sacred song we must not only, as a mere act of intellection, attain to the thought of the words, but we must *utter that thought upward to God*—before we can be said rightly to worship.

In this manner only, as I conceive, can the singing of a church choir ever become devotional to the exterior auditor. He may listen, enchanted, to the reiterated *Te Deums* of a lofty service through all the churchly year—and yet not once have worshipped. Whereas, he may catch a single *laudamus* or devout aspiration from the lips of the choir, and speeding it individually up from his own heart, may have known an instant of true worship. Or, again, the pious eloquence of a devout organist may have so wrought upon the listener, through the mazes of solemn harmonies evolved on the majestic organ, (beneath which were appreciable not only the skill of artistic fingers, but the throbbings of an earnest, religious heart,) that he has been irresistibly impelled onward spiritually to exclaim—*Father, I adore Thee!* and music has preached effectively to his soul—he has worshipped.

Now, the question is, whether these conditions of wor-

ship are complied with in our ordinary choir performance of Church Music. In other words—

CAN WE WORSHIP BY A CHOIR?

It is evident, that inasmuch as silent worship is possible, and that we can, if we will, accept a devotional thought as uttered by the lips of a choir, or gathered from the hymn-book before us, and silently speed that thought upward to God—worship by choir is a possible thing. At the same time, it is insisted, that the accompanying circumstances of choir singing are such that it is highly probable that we shall not, and do not, worship.

The hindrances to worship involved in choir singing, I will proceed briefly to detail.

1st. The involuntary action of the mind when a separate few are singing, detached, as to place, from ourselves, is passively to listen—not to participate. The mind immediately assumes a passive and receptive attitude: not the active attitude essential to worship. Under other circumstances than those of devotion it has become natural to us, and our habit, to listen, simply, when we hear music.

2d. The implied object of finished choir singing is musical gratification. But it is a difficult thing to be musically gratified and entertained, and to be worshipping God at the same moment. Music is an exceedingly absorbing thing: and, particularly in its more embellished and elaborated form, naturally withdraws attention from all else, even from the words associated with it, and concentrates the mind upon itself.

3d. Our attitude during choir performance is very un-

favorable to devotion. We are generally in a position which seems to imply no thought whatever of worship. Most congregations remain seated: and, in all cases, the open eye, the open book, the undevout bearing, have no affinity with an act of worship.

But, even supposing this to be otherwise—that we be really bent upon devotion, when the choir commences singing, and are prepared spiritually to engage in this act: we directly meet with a certain intellectual difficulty in this: which difficulty consists,—

4th. In the slow pace of musical utterance on the part of the choir: an utterance so lengthened, that it is difficult for the mind to dwell so long on the words of the hymn. If we ourselves be uttering the words with the choir, the mind is nailed to the thought, word by word: but the mind, when unfettered by utterance, acts with infinitely greater rapidity than the tongue. Therefore, when the words are all before us, we have glanced through the verse and mastered the entire thought before the choir have uttered more than half the first line. And where is the mind, then? What are we thinking about while the choir are singing the rest of the stanza?

Thus we see, that a concentrated attention upon the hymn, and that intelligent thought-sequence which a spiritual participation in an act of devotion certainly implies, are difficult when combined with the slow musical utterance of a choir.

But here the question may naturally suggest itself, Why do not each and all the objections here advanced equally apply to the prayer of the clergyman—why may not the

choir lead in one act of devotion as the clergyman does in another?

This seems plausible at first glance—but we shall find the accompanying circumstances of the two acts greatly to differ. Our attitude, external and spiritual, instantly changes when a prayer from the pulpit or altar commences. Why it should be so; in what respect a prayer differs from a prayer; why an appeal to heaven by hymn should not involve the same internal and external attitude as a prayer by plain prose—are questions of subtle theological difference which I will not attempt to answer.

But, again,—in the clergyman's prayer we have the quick-paced utterance of speech in place of a slow-paced musical utterance: and in extemporaneous prayer, which is the prevailing style in this country, we cannot anticipate the thought of the clergyman: therefore the mind follows easily the articulation of the clergyman; nor does it readily wander from an uncompleted thought. If the prayer be a prescribed form, and we have the words before us, then the mind may glance in the same manner—it is true: but here, again, it is very much hindered from so doing by the quicker articulation of speech, not peculiar to music, and by the constant recurrence of responses: which not only admirably individualize prayer, but confine the mind to its devotions, or recall it thereto if it have wandered.

For myself, I cannot resist a conviction which has gradually been forced upon me by long reflection on this subject, that the more we can put words into the mouth of the worshipper, and the more we can effect individual utterance, the nearer we approach to a successful accomplish-

ment of public worship. For public worship, it must be remembered, is only the combined worship of individuals: and it is successful only to such extent as the individual is concerned in it. Public worship is, in fact, only private worship, transferred to a public place, and made a matter of unanimous participation. The conditions of private worship ought, it would seem, then, so far as is practicable, still to be retained. A chief condition is audible speech: for we are not accustomed to engage in our private devotions silently and inaudibly. Therefore, the more we can secure audible utterance in public worship, the nearer we approach to the individuality of private devotion, and to the closeness and intimacy of a soul in direct communication with its Maker.

WORSHIP BY CONGREGATIONAL SONG.

The hindrances to worship experienced in music by choir, now enumerated, are not encountered in congregational song. Here we have individual and audible utterance: the mind is thereby nailed to the succession of words and to the thought. Others are not performing an act of worship for us while we are listening to that performance. We listen to no one; for we are participators. We criticise no one; for our mind is not in that attitude. Neither the difficulty nor the charm of music unduly withdraw our attention from the words we are uttering: for congregational song is, or should be, both simple and familiar: there is enough quiet charm in the music for interior effect, but the tones remain subordinate to the words, which, in a devotional act, must have the pre-eminence in our

minds. The music being thus simple and familiar, we are enabled freely to utter our petition, or our praise, in the doubly beautiful language of music and poetry. The poetry expresses the thought; the music expresses the feeling; and the two ascend, like twin-doves of the soul, to heaven.

It is by no means assumed, that because persons join in congregational song they will therefore *necessarily* worship. We cannot absolutely control thought. Indeed, if others' experiences accord with the writer's, they will have known some regretted occasion of their lives, when, after having even audibly repeated the Lord's Prayer, they have been conscious, at the close, that they were thinking of something else. But the position confidently assumed is,—that in congregational song there is no excuse for not worshipping: that is, there is no hindrance, either of a mental or artistic kind which can interrupt devotion: and it is the soul's fault, and not music's, or that of aught else, if the individual do not worship.

For such reasons, then, I consider it the legitimate office of the artistic choir to embellish and enrich public service: to impress: to prepare for worship:—the legitimate office of congregational song, to subserve the purposes of actual devotion.

Artistic effects, like architecture, and painting, and sculpture, have more or less been used for religious purposes from the time of Solomon's Temple down to the present day. The splendor and efficacy of these artistic appliances in that ancient temple, (which was inspired of God,) have never yet been cancelled or invalidated. And surely our Maker is worthy of the best offering

of poor human Art, consecrated by a reverent and devout spirit.

Devotional words may often effectively be put into the mouths of the choir:—congregational song may often be used as merely animative to worship. But the peculiar office now assigned to each seems to me unquestionably that which each is best calculated to fulfill. And in the selection of hymns, (the varied character of which will hereafter be considered,) the clergyman would do well, as they are intended for the one or the other style of singing, to bear this distinction in mind.

CHAPTER V.

A SUNDAY IN A GERMAN CHURCH.

I ONCE found myself in one of the cities of central Germany. The leading Protestant Church of the place had been closed for some months, while undergoing repairs, and meanwhile the Roman Catholics, with a liberality of feeling sometimes met with in that country, had thrown open their magnificent edifice to the worship of the Protestants—the Protestant service immediately succeeding the ordinary morning service of the Catholics. The only change made was the concealment of the altar, by a curtain dropped from the ceiling. In front of this curtain was a temporary desk for the clergyman.

On a Sunday morning I entered this cathedral, upon the front of which was inscribed in imposing capitals the solemn word—DEO. The immense edifice was crowded with worshippers. The Duke and his court (a Protestant house) were present, occupying a separate tribune on the side of the pulpit. The body of the edifice was filled, promiscuously, with garrison troops, citizens, and peasantry from the surrounding country in their picturesque national costumes. The introductory voluntary was just commencing. The powerful organ, which seemed to have its

place near the altar, and was concealed by a curtain, was crowding every arch and corner of the immense pile with its massive harmonies. The air around us was a sea of music; its rich surgings broke majestically on the vaulted roof, and echoed among the lofty arches, and beat, solemnly, upon the silent heart.

Meantime, the assembled multitude had found the first hymn, which, as usual in German Churches, was indicated upon tablets, placed at convenient intervals upon the walls. And now the rich tone-masses of the organ gradually merged into the familiar strain of an old church choral. At this well-known signal the great assembly, from the sovereign to the peasant, arose. The introductory strain of the organ ceased, and a trumpet, behind the veil, led off in clear, courageous tones the choral melody, sustained by full organ accompaniment. Simultaneously with this, a chorus of a thousand voices rolled up from the congregation in a mighty song of praise to Jehovah—a song which the lofty roof seemed scarce capable of repressing: majestic, soul-thrilling.

As the last echoes of this choral Hallelujah died upon the ear, a clergyman, who until now had not been seen, advanced and pronounced, in a deep-toned and solemn voice, the opening prayer. He retired, and again unheralded, except by the invisible organ, the thousand-voiced chorus swelled to the skies. The sermon immediately succeeded; brief and impressive: then a closing choral was sung, and after the benediction, the cathedral doors were once more thrown open to the congregation: while the parting tones of the organ followed us as we passed into the outer world, like sacred memories of the hour.

Now, here was a combination of singularly felicitous circumstances, and which afford us, I think, some valuable hints as to Church Music:

1st. The machinery of the music was concealed. Here was no twitching of curtains by the choir; no preparatory whisper, and flutter, and turning of leaves; no clearing of throats, no obtrusion of personalities, in any way, upon the audience.

2d. The act of worship was simultaneous, and, seemingly, *spontaneous*. The clergyman did not announce, and then recite, preparatorily, the invocation to Jehovah, about to be made.—Why should an invocation to the Supreme Being be recited beforehand?

3d. All united, from a common level of devotion—prince, priest and people. There was no unnecessary personal intervention: each soul bore its humble, individual part in the common worship: and, moreover, with the greatest reverence and earnestness—a feature so unusual in our churches at home, and yet so common abroad! A very observable thing, also, was the utter unconsciousness of each worshipper—both of the observation of others and of any possible effect produced by his music.

I do not claim for this example of congregational singing, that it could be copied in every particular, or that it were desirable so to do: many of the circumstances mentioned were incidental: but the unanimous participation in the service, and the withdrawal of all unnecessary personality, were parts of a well-considered system.

It is evident that in our present Church Music we greatly lack purity of style. We should clearly distinguish between the different forms of church song, and the

purpose each is best calculated to subserve. An ornamental and impressive style of music, as legitimately represented by choir performance, we should never confound with a devotional style, as represented by congregational singing. Let us act intelligently, when we act at all. Let us not thwart our church devotions, by making them the responsibility of a few, whose only *realized* responsibility is the music. Let us not, on the other hand, impede the development of high musical Art, by attempting to make it ornamental and impressive, and, at the same time, congregationally simple and devotional.

We need to simplify the congregational style, and amplify the choir style. Our present choir music is too difficult, and on too extended a vocal scale for the mass of worshippers, on the one hand, and too cramped and hampered for the glories of sacred Art on the other. A short tune of four lines, which, in itself, is but half of a legitimate melody, (a completed melody consisting of eight,) is but very insignificant material to work with, in an Art whose resources are boundless as those of music.

CHAPTER VI.

CHILDREN'S MUSIC IN CHURCHES.

The first thing to be cared for in the musical arrangement of churches is—worship. Worship, I have already endeavored to show, is represented—musically—by congregational song: this, therefore, should be the basis of all Church Music, and for this, unquestionably, provision should first be made.

Our best reliance for the support of congregational song is, I am satisfied, that which, perhaps, might not at first suggest itself—children. Children are the future church. But, aside from this, the earnestness of their young, fresh natures; the facility with which they learn; the pathetic innocence of their voices; and the strong appeal of their example, as well as their music, to the hearts of parents and older persons present, render them of signal service in congregational song.

Children have been too long overlooked in the musical provisions of churches. The "suffer little children to come unto Me" has been too much forgotten—certainly in the approach to heaven by music.

The most favorable circumstance for the application of children's voices, is when a parish school is connected with

the church. The children can then be taught music as a welcome recreation to graver studies. Half an hour every day would soon prepare them, in connection with an organ, to lead, and sustain, simple congregational music in any church. This instruction would best be imparted by the parish school teacher, because he is always on the spot. But, if incapable of doing this, it could be undertaken by the church organist, or chorister; with whom there might be a special understanding that he should give two lessons a week of an hour each: and, with the aid of this instruction, any teacher could conduct a short daily singing exercise, at the beginning or close of the school.

These children could be taught to sing either by rote—and thus learn the hymn tunes and chants to be used in a congregation, (which is a very easy matter,) or, there could be combined with this, elementary instruction, by which they might soon learn to sing in parts, and read music at sight: and it is surprising how soon children can be brought to this point of musical proficiency.

If there be no parish school, the Sabbath-school could next be looked to as a nursery of Church Music. This school might on some week day, (Saturday afternoon, for instance,) be gathered as a singing-school. The organist or conductor of the music, by special understanding as part of his duties, might have this in charge, and teach the children, either by rote or by note, both the music of the church and such secular music as would enliven the exercise. On Sunday, a few moments of the morning and afternoon school might be passed in singing through the music of the approaching service.

If parents, who often incur such heavy expense in

the musical education of their children, would but reflect, that the rudiments of music and the training of the voice are all the same, whether acquired for church or secular purposes, and that this is preliminary ground which even the most expensive teacher must go over, they would appreciate the great saving of time and expenditure in thus preparing their children for future private instruction—even if a small tax were levied upon the church, generally, to remunerate the organist for his additional trouble.

With such a choir of Sabbath-school children, it would be well to combine several teachers; who could both give them confidence by singing with them, and exercise a certain oversight during service.

Next to children, a congregational choir is the best reliance for congregational song. There are always amateur singers enough in every church to sustain, when combined, plain congregational music. An invitation from the clergyman will generally bring young people enough together to form a choir. Such a choir might sing in parts, or in unison. If parts are sung, it is understood that they but strengthen the harmony of the organ, while the congregation sing in unison. There are often voices in a congregation, particularly of men, whose range is such that they cannot well sing the air of our present Church Music, but are able to sing a bass. There is no reason for their not doing so: for, the great object being to sing, it is of less importance what is sung, provided the part be correctly carried. The same thing may be said of families, whose musical training is such that they can sing in parts. If a congregation be provided with a book containing the music, which is exceedingly desirable, and this music can be prac-

tised at home, nothing could be more delightful than such family part-singing in church.

Our two reliances, then, for the introduction of congregational song are children and a choir composed of the youth of the church. Without one of these, it is to be doubted whether congregational song could be introduced, or with interest sustained. After a time, when a generation of singing children shall have grown up, an organ and an organist may be all that is necessary in a church—as is now the case in most of the churches of Germany: and this, combined with a pulpit and a preacher, would be the simplest feasible church arrangement. A pulpit and a pastor: an organ and an organist. A precentor in the place of an organ—(as in the Scotch service)—in other words, an obtrusive personality in place of an unobtrusive instrument, is exceedingly undesirable, both in respect to music and devotion.

The drilling of an entire congregation in the music of the church, is, in my own opinion, impracticable and unnecessary. The inconvenience of assembling especially for this purpose, is an insurmountable obstacle: such practice may be successful once or twice, but so soon as the novelty wears off, the interest subsides, and the attendance dwindles. Let the choir of children, or the congregational choir, be taught the music: let there be a book with the limited amount of music for congregational purposes necessary, prepared for the pews. And after this, repetition is the best teacher: if the music be resolutely adhered to and persisted in, the congregation will inevitably learn tunes and chants in the pleasantest possible way—by actually using them.

CHAPTER VII.

THE POSITION OF CHOIRS AND ORGANS.

This subject has already been ably presented by an English writer, William Sparks, in a pamphlet published by Novello, of London, containing both the author's views and quotations from other authorities; the whole having originally constituted an address delivered before the Yorkshire Architectural Society, May 26, 1852. This pamphlet will serve as an excellent basis, to which may be added such other material as may present itself. The following quotations will afford some preliminary information:—

"History and precedent are not at all agreed as to the original position of organs in churches. For this king of instruments seems before the Reformation, as now, to have stood in all sorts of places:—on choir-screens; rood-screens; over west doors; over and in transept arches; on the floor of the chancel: over the altar, (as in the Royal Chapel of the Versailles and the Tuilleries); under the tower; round corners; in hearing, but out of sight—and vice versa: in short, it would be impossible to say, I think, not where organs have stood, but where they have not stood in churches."—(*Rev. J. Jebb.*)

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"No person who is at all acquainted either with music or the principles of acoustics, can imagine that an organ placed under a low arch, with three sides of it close to dead walls—in fact a stone

box—will produce the same effect as an organ placed in an open situation in a church where the vibration is considerable."

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"The injury to an organ occasioned by the products of combustion from the gas, now so generally used in churches, and which, I need not stay to prove, are much more detrimental in the upper part of a building, is a strong ground for removing the instrument from galleries and other lofty situations."

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"A choir should never be in a gallery."

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"The gallery, the modern place of performance, is altogether an innovation of later times, and Popish in its origin. That corrupt idolatry of music which prevailed in Italy, induced the admittance of persons into the choir who were obviously unfit to sit among the clergy, and therefore were placed, like mere instruments, in a loft. There is an appearance of theatrical exhibition in this obtrusive elevation of the singers, frequently attracting the gaze of the congregation (perhaps I should rather say of the audience) below: who turn their backs upon minister, altar and everything sacred, absorbed by that which a savage would actually suppose to be the idol of our worship. * * * The ministers of divine worship, such as the lay clerks and boys, or regularly appointed singers, have a sacred office to perform, and in this capacity should occupy a place near the clergy. * * * It is obvious that such an arrangement requires no additional room, but merely an exchange of places. * * * The modern practice quite cuts off the clergyman from the singers, and gives the latter an indecent elevation."—(*Rev. J. Jebb.*)

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"Those who have had much to do with choirs need not be reminded, that there is a great difference between the *conduct* of singers in a choir (especially the youthful portion of them) when placed in the nave or chancel, under the immediate eye of the minister and congregation, and their conduct in a gallery. where they but too often entertain the idea that they are not there as a part of the con-

gregation—and members of the church—but as vocalists employed to sing to, and for, the people."

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The judgment of every thoughtful person must confirm the prominent idea in these quotations, that sacred music, like the rest of a sacred service, should proceed from the clerical end of the church: and that both the organ and the choir should be among a worshipping people, and not isolated, and away from them—this very isolation seeming to indicate, that an isolated duty is to be performed, by persons set apart for this service. Experience proves, that it is exceedingly difficult to unite the voices of a congregation with a choir and an organ, when the latter are perched in a gallery: whereas, experience equally proves, that music proceeding from among the people, even when led by a single voice, (as frequently at communion services,) proves so contagious, that we have often admirable congregational singing at once: such as it may have been, perhaps, in the early Primitive Church, or among the disciples; when Peter did not sing a solo; or Peter and John a duet; but where, *together*, the disciples sang an hymn.

It being decided, as I think it must be, that the clerical end of the church is the proper location for choirs and organs, we can now advance to some nearer specifications as to the arrangement of both. Mr. Sparks remarks, "I need scarcely say, that the arrangement of the choir and organ must be greatly regulated by the size and shape of the church: so that no rule can be laid down for the exact position of either. Although it is not expected that choral service will be attained in every church, yet it is always desirable to arrange the singers so as to form two

choirs: and I may venture to lay it down as an axiom, that service, however musical, is not choral service if there are not two choirs."

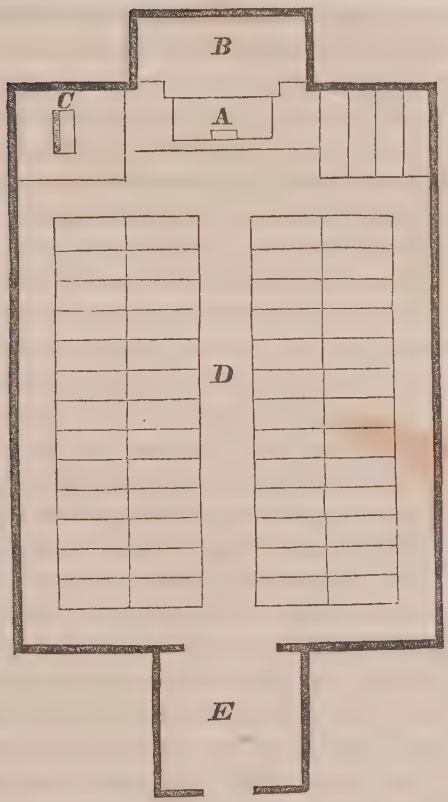
The idea of two choirs will no doubt be a novel one to most Americans, even to the Episcopal portion of whom a full cathedral service may not be familiar. The pamphlet of Mr. Sparks, from which I have quoted, aims mainly at this more extended cathedral service. But as the present work is written for the Church universal, and the desire is, to be useful to all denominations of worshipping Christians, it will be well to commence with the simplest form of structure and of worship, and proceed to the more elaborate.

The simplest form of worship, combined with the least elaborate church-structure, is to be found among Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and the various non-Episcopal denominations who, taken together, form by far the greater proportion of American Christians.

It may be remarked, here, that the Methodists, more than any other denomination, have practically favored congregational song; although, thus far, it has existed only in its rude and uncultivated state. Yet, no one can deny, that the true spirit of congregational singing has swayed the heart of this devout people, far removed as their music may have been from the standard to which, with such materials, and such a heart of melody, they might have attained. Of late years, however, certain prejudices, particularly as regards organs, have gradually been yielding, and now this dignified instrument is finding its place in their churches.

The plain, square church, then, is oftenest found among our American denominations, and for this prevailing shape the position of the organ and the choir ought first to be determined.

It must introductorily be observed, that a prominent idea in the minds of most building-committees (rightly or not being hardly my purpose to inquire) is to economise space, in order to accumulate rentage. This, therefore, has necessarily to be borne in mind, in making any suggestion for the locating of an organ or a choir. Another consideration, however, ought equally to be borne in mind, that "removing an organ or a choir from the gallery requires no additional room, but merely an exchange of place"—as was stated in a foregoing paragraph. Moreover, it is possible so to place an organ, as actually to save both space and rentage. This possibility is offered by a certain advantage in the structure of the organ: which allows the action to be carried to almost any distance from the instrument itself; rendering it unnecessary that either organist or choir should be in its immediate vicinity. This will be seen by the first plan, which has actually been realized in a large organ built by Mr. Jardine, of New-York, for a Methodist Church in Pittsburg, Pa. The following is a diagram of this instrument, and the church for which it is intended:—



A. The Pulpit.

B. Organ, standing behind the pulpit, and on the pulpit platform, in an arched recess, constructed for the purpose.

C. Organist's Desk, standing sideways, in the centre of the large square corner pew, with seats conveniently disposed around for members of the Choir. The Key and Draw Stop, and Pedal Action extend therefrom horizontally beneath the pulpit platform, and thence backward into the Organ. The organist faces the pulpit.

D. Central Aisle and body of the church edifice.

E. Tower Entrance.

There are no galleries.

It may be remarked, that although the organist is at such great distance from the organ, and the mechanism so extended, the touch is perfectly prompt and easy, and the machinery not liable to get out of order.

The advantages of such a location for an organ are evident. It serves as a dignified and ornamental background for the pulpit: it is out of the way, occupying no pew-room: it is in the best possible position for sound, pouring out its full volume of tone into the open church: the choir, on the other hand, form part of the congregation, and their music must almost necessarily prove contagious, and spread to the rest of the people.

An improvement, it strikes me however, might be made even in this plan. There is always more or less space, as in the present instance, between the pulpit and the first row of pews. The organist, therefore, might have his desk directly fronting the pulpit, on a level with the congregation, and sitting with his back to the assemblage. On the right and left of him, in front of the first pews, might be seats, or moveable benches, for Sabbath School children, or for a congregational choir. The advantages of this plan would be, that the whole musical arrangement would occupy no pew-space whatever; it would be under the immediate eye and control of the clergyman; and the effect of children (if there were such) clustering around the altar, would be an exceedingly pleasing one. An advantage would also be gained as to the organ; inasmuch as the action would extend in a straight line under the pulpit, and, forming no angle, would be less complicated than in the other instance. A low screen might protect the organist from observation, so that there would be no undue conspicuousness, either of organist or choir. Indeed, the organist's desk might be sunk somewhat in the floor, below the range of vision.

This plan, it strikes me, is the best one for a square or

oblong church, or, perhaps, for a church of any shape or any order of service. It has the advantage, that it can be applied to churches of a square shape already built (of which there are so many) where the choir and organ have mistakenly been perched in a gallery. For, at comparatively small expense, a recess behind any pulpit could be built out for an organ, and the organ action be extended in front; while the place for the organist and the choir is ever ready. It is evident that the space thus left in the gallery, by the removal of an organ or choir, would be so much actual gain for seats or pews.

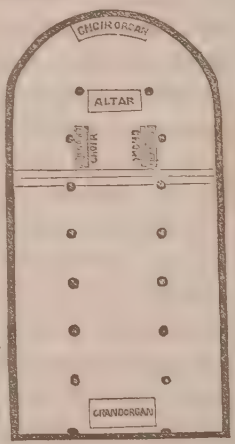
The plan now proposed is based on the supposition that there is but one choir, and a simple order of service, like that found mainly among non-Episcopal Churches. For a plain Episcopal service, where the cathedral plan of a double choir for antiphonal singing is not followed, (and instances of a double choir are but very rare,) we have only to displace the pulpit, substitute the altar, and the same arrangement would just as admirably serve. The choir and organist would be without the chancel rail; the chancel itself would be elevated, as usual, above the level of the ground-floor, so that the organist, if facing the altar, need not obscure the vision, or be unduly conspicuous. There would be a clear space around the altar, and behind it, as a noble background, would rise the organ. The pulpit, or lecturn, would then stand, as usual, at some side point, without the chancel rail.

We can now advance to a more complicated service, where a double choir is used. For this we have a very admirable model in the Church of the Madelaine, Paris.

Mr. Sparks, who presents the plan in his pamphlet, thus remarks:—

"In all the principal churches of Paris there are two organs; one being placed in close proximity to the choir—and especially built to accompany the voices—the other, the grand organ, invariably standing over the inner porch of the western entrance, and principally used for voluntaries, preludes, interludes, etc.

"This will be seen by the plan of the beautiful church of the Madelaine, in which the effect of the harmony is most impressive; and while repudiating the obviously overwrought attention to this striking effect, I cannot, as a musician, withhold the observation, that the occasional response by the grand organ to the passages performed by the choir, accompanied by its organ, is most thrilling. I may observe that the latter (choir) organ, is unseen, being placed, as I was given to understand, in the centre of a space behind the altar. This instrument contains many reed stops of a superior tone and quality, producing a most grateful harmony, fusing and blending in the happiest manner with the voices."



Now, without including *two* organs, at either end of the church, as in this arrangement, the general plan here presented might admirably serve for our American Episcopal Churches, where a double choir is to be used. The organ could be concealed (as in the plan) or revealed to view. The organist in the Madelaine is hid, it is presumed, behind the altar. But it is difficult to see how a double choir at such a distance could be well managed, or that musical consentaneousness, necessary between organ and

choir, be secured. The position for the organist already proposed, without the chancel rail, and facing both the altar and the choirs, is certainly the most favorable for musical purposes: its practicability, however, (which *seems* so very apparent,) has yet to be tested by actual trial. It may be remarked, as to the place of the choirs in this plan, that they could be concealed from view by a range of high chancel chairs, bending outward and circularly round, to the corners of the chancel, the choirs being hid behind them. This plan has recently been adopted in the new Trinity Chapel, New-York.

Mr. Sparks gives four rules to be observed in the location of organs and choirs :—

1. "An organ should not play over one choir to another choir.
2. "The people should not be between the organ and the choir.
3. "The singers in a choir must not have their backs to the people.
4. "A choir should *never* be in a gallery."

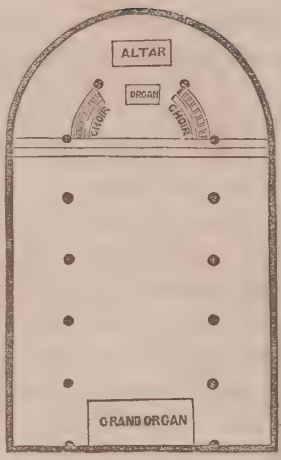
Of these rules, the 3d can surely have no force in a devotional style of music, where the choir are supposed to be a part of the congregation, and where not musical effect, but devotional unanimity of the whole people is the point to be gained.

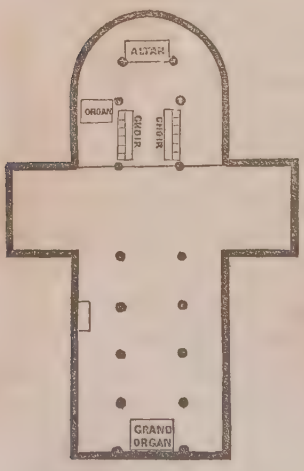
I will now present a series of diagrams found in Mr. Sparks' pamphlet, indicating various locations of organs and choirs in France and in England: in each of which plans, some evident inferiority to those already given, I think will be found.

"At St. Denis, Paris, of which we have here a view, the choir organ, it will be seen, is placed in front of the grand altar; and, being very low, does not at all intercept the view, the choir being ranged on either side.

"I may here remark, that when I entered the church, some portion of the service was being performed, and two bassoons being added to the accompaniment to support the bass of the organ, a most preternatural sensation was excited."

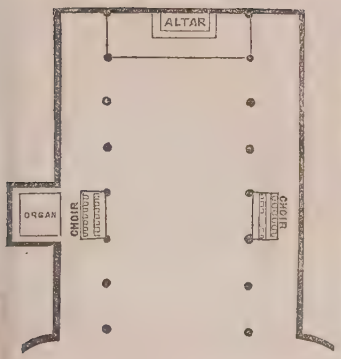
"In the church of *St. Sulpice*, the choir organ is placed at the north side of the choir, but to the east of the singers, as seen below:"—



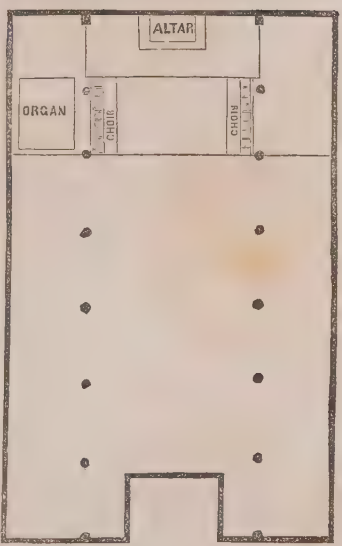


This plan is very like that in the *Church of the Transfiguration*, New-York. It is also the plan of the *New-York Trinity Chapel*, except that the organ is carried still farther back into a recess, and concealed from view. In both cases "the organ would play over one choir to another choir," and the position for sound is greatly inferior to that behind the altar or pulpit. The same is true of the two following plans in English churches:—

TEMPLE.

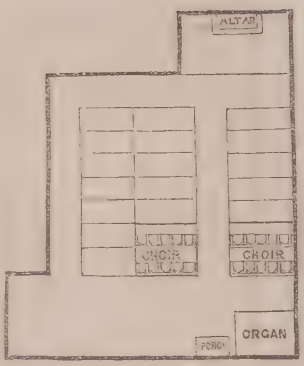


ST. ANDREW'S.

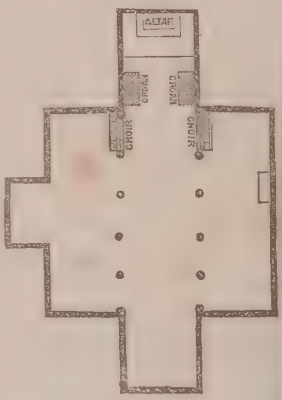


"I stated in Rule I. an organ must not play over one choir to another choir, as at the Temple Church, and at St. Andrew's, Wells-street. It has a one-sided effect; and, as the organist generally hears one choir above the other, and the choir nearest the organ hears considerably more of the organ than the other choir opposite, it is frequently the cause of serious faults and blemishes in the performance of the music. For this reason the organ should always, if possible, be placed considerably above the heads of the singers,—the tones of an instrument proceeding immediately before a choir will, assuredly, rather confuse than assist them. If, therefore, circumstances require the organ to be placed on the floor of a church, the sound-board should be fixed as *high* as the architecture, or other points, will allow."

"At Canons Ashby, (Northamptonshire,) the people face *east*. The two choirs are behind them, and the organ still west, behind the choirs. This plan is good for the singing of the choir, and the people's hearing and singing; but it is objected to, on the ground that the congregation might *turn round*, as they but too often do, when the choir is in a west gallery."

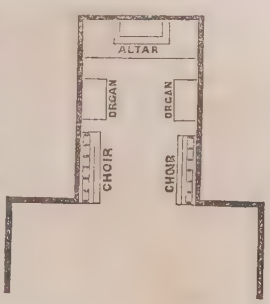


"One plan which I would suggest, is to have the two choirs facing one another, near the desk and pulpit (the people facing east,) and to have the organ on *both* sides of the chancel (the conducting tubes and trackers going under the floor), or at the east end of *one* aisle.

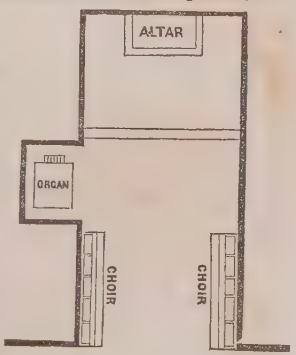


"We will now suppose the singers to be in the chancel (for the priest's position is, of course, beyond my humble province), and assume that the two choirs are on the two sides of the chancel, as at St. Margaret's, Leicester. Then the organ, as here shown, (if the chancel is large enough,) may be east of the choir, and divided."

ST. MARGARET'S.



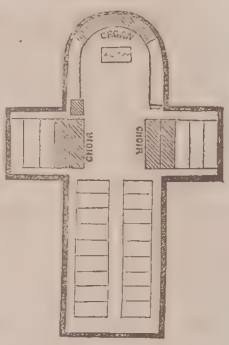
"This particular organ at St. Margaret's, Leicester, is, however, clumsily managed, and looks ugly and untidy; but there is, of course, no necessity for that. Besides being divided, a part of the organ on the north side is placed in an additional building, which also serves for the vestry. This plan answers exceedingly well; and if the choir *is* to be in the chancel, and the chancel is large enough, it is, perhaps, the best plan. If the organ is small, it may be altogether inside the arch opening into the vestry, so as to make, by its front an ornamental filling up of the arch. n that case, it would be better to have the player at the *east* side of the organ; and the blower opposite to him, as shown in the plan."



At Byfield, Northamptonshire, the organ, as in cases named just now, is over the altar, which is, of course, indefensible; but the *musical* effect might be good if the choir was in the chancel. At Cannons, in Hertfordshire, Handel's organ is, or was, in a similar position."

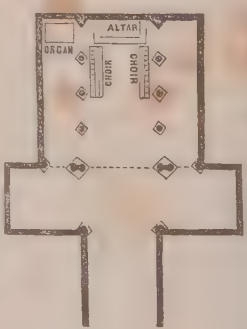
"At St. Mark's, Chelsea, there is at present no organ; the choirs face each other in the transepts, and the people face *east* in the nave. This, it appears to me, is just as it should be. It has been proposed, in case an organ is placed in the church, to put it round the apse, between the colonnade and the exterior wall. I have no doubt it would answer very well in that position. If a chancel has aisles, the east end of one aisle might, I think, often be a very good place for the organ, or against the wall of the aisle, especially if elevated.

ST. MARK'S.

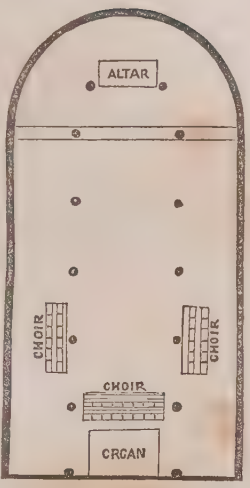


This plan in St. Mark's, given by Mr. Sparks, strikes me as a very excellent one for a church with a complete transept: the choir music proceeding so immediately from among the people. The only objection is of a musical nature; the choir being so far removed from the organ and organist, (who sits behind the altar.) And yet, if the congregational singing were general, its audibleness to the organist would be sufficient for easy accompaniment.

"An organ-builder of great experience, gives it as the result of his observation, that the most favorable position for sound seems to be where the organ can be placed under a roof which has a pitch or inclination of 45 degrees. A *low* roof, especially when plastered, is generally prejudicial to sound; and a number of angles in a low roof is also most unfavorable to sound. He considers that wood and stone are each as favorable reflectors of sound as chalk and plaster are unfavorable."



"At Daventry Church, as circumstances prevented the choir being removed from the gallery, I found it answer well to place one choir in the north and the other in the south gallery, as indicated in the plan. The antiphonal character of the musical part of the service was, by this arrangement, well sustained.



"The most successful example I can adduce of the position of an organ near the choir, and not in a gallery, is in the new Church of St. Mary Magdalene, St. Pancras, London, where the organ (a charming instrument, built by Gray & Davison) is placed against the wall, at the east end of the south aisle, on stone corbels about eight feet high—thus elevating the instrument considerably above the singers, so that both sides of the choirs and the congregation hear the organ equally well."

The inferiority of all these plans for placing organs and choirs to those given in the first diagrams, must, I think, be evident. A single choir in front of the pulpit, in non-Episcopal, and in front of the chancel in Episcopal churches—a double choir on either side of the chancel, whether within or

without the chancel rail—an organ in the nave of the church, behind the altar or pulpit, with trackers for the organist, who shall face pulpit, altar and choir—seem to me decidedly the best plans, both for musical and devotional purposes.

Next to this, as an arrangement for single choirs, a space behind the pulpit or altar, for organ, organist and choir, by which all would be concealed from view, (except the upper portion of the organ as background,) were perhaps the best plan: this is liable, however, to the objection of a certain isolation from the congregation and their musical sympathy.

In concluding this subject, a single word may be said as to purely artistic choirs for ornamental and impressive purposes, such as are found in the Roman Church. These purposes may to some extent be subserved by volunteer and congregational choirs, when well-drilled. But artistic Church Music should be invisible, if possible, and seem to come to us from afar, and from some unseen quarter, in order to produce upon us its legitimate effect. Any place, invisible to the congregation, might therefore be assigned to such an artistic choir: that over the portal or entrance to the church, is perhaps as good as any. This style of performance is of course an exception to the rule, that a choir "should *never* be in a gallery."

In the case of two organs, however, a large and a small, (which we can hardly expect to see realized in this country,) the reverse of the plan adopted in the Parisian churches would seem, in my own view, best: the large organ being below, as appertaining to the people, and the small one above, to the artistic choir.

* * * * * * * *

While the foregoing was being put into type for the present volume, I received the following letter :—

MARIETTA, OHIO, *August* 7, 1855.

Dear Sir :—Your *New-York Musical World* for November 25, 1854, having fallen into my hands, I was interested in an article regarding the position of an Organ in a Church—the Organ being placed back of the pulpit.

Being interested in a church now building in this place, I take the liberty of writing to you in regard to the same.

The church here is 49 by 77 feet outside, and 26 feet high inside. I am pleased with the plan of having the organ in front, so that the audience can "face the music ;" but, being no musician, I desire to know whether the organ cannot be placed at A, (see plan,) as well as back of the pulpit. The organ could be placed at A, in an arch 3 or 4 feet deep, and on the opposite side, in an arch not so deep, I would place the communion-table and baptismal-font at B, with a higher arch over the desk.

I wish to know whether the position of the organ one side makes any difference in the sound ? What depth the organ would occupy ? The height of the arch, and width necessary for an organ for a church of this size ?

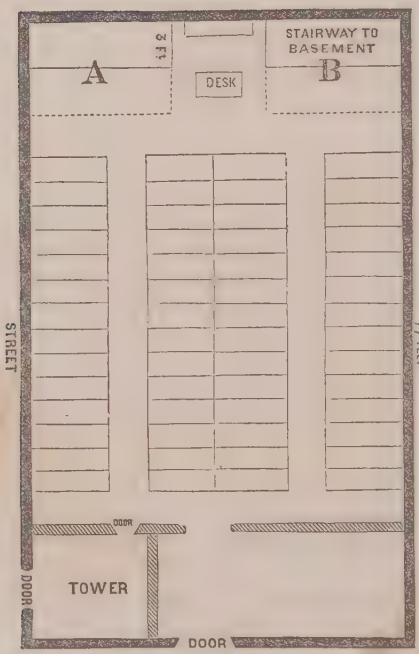
The building is Gothic, with heavy buttresses, and four double windows on each side.

This church is for the "First Unitarian Society," and is being built by Nahum Ward, Esq., as a donation to the Society, and we desire to have it,—in its internal arrangements,—*the best.*

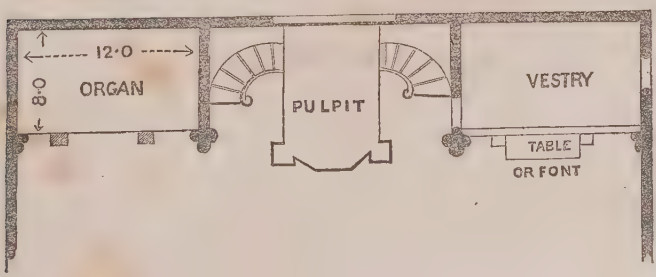
If you will pardon my freedom in thus troubling you, and if you have time, give me the information desired, you will oblige your

Ob't. Serv't,

WM. J. WARD.



On reception of this letter I conferred with Mr. Jardine, the ingenious and excellent organ-builder of New-York, already referred to, and the result of our conferences was the following plan, to meet the views expressed in the letter from Mr. Ward of placing the organ on one side: a plan which Mr. Jardine kindly sketched in full, for the use of the society in question, and for these pages:—



This plan, for a single choir has, in some respects, an advantage over the one in which the organ is placed in the centre. But it would not serve as well for a double choir,

or for a church in which there are galleries—there being none, it is presumed of course, in the Marietta Church.

As regards the question of the space an organ, for a church of the dimensions given, would occupy, Mr. Jardine replies, that an instrument costing $1,500, would be about 7 feet deep, 12 wide, and 18 feet high.

But a very excellent rule, originated by the quaint, as accomplished Dr. Hodges, of Trinity Parish, New-York, by which to decide upon the desirable cost of an organ for a given church, is the following :—

Multiply the number of persons the church will accommodate by 3—*and you have your organ.* For instance, a church seating 500 persons would need an organ costing about $1,500. For 1,000 persons, a three thousand dollar organ would be desirable, etc.

PART II.

PART II.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUR PSALMS AND HYMNS.

Church Music takes its coloring to so great an extent from the words with which it is wedded, that a clear understanding of the character of the latter seems necessary to a just apprehension of our subject. I have therefore carefully investigated two collections of psalms and hymns in extensive use among us, presuming these to be a fair exponent of our collections generally. The contents I have analyzed and classified, and am now prepared to give a condensed view of the result.

The special object of this investigation, I would state, was to gain some definite knowledge as to the amount of devotional element contained in these collections: or, otherwise, ascertain to what extent our psalms and hymns involve *actual worship.*

The first collection examined, was that of the Episcopal Prayer-Book. The second, a large collection used in Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, entitled the *Church Psalmist.*

In addition to this, however, I had also recourse to that fountain of sacred song—the Psalms of David. These psalms I similarly classified :—so that a fair comparison can now be made between this inspired collection of sacred song and our uninspired ; and the specific tone and aim of each discovered.

I will now proceed to enumerate the different classes of sacred song found in the three collections named, give an example of each class, and state the proportion of each to the entire collection.

Class I:—*Prayer.*

Under this class are included none which are not a direct and continuous appeal to the Divine Being, and are strictly prayers throughout.

EXAMPLE :—

Father, whate'er of earthly bliss
Thy sovereign will denies,
Accepted at Thy throne, let this
My humble prayer arise;

Give me a calm and thankful heart,
From every murmur free ;
The blessings of Thy grace impart,
And make me live to Thee :

Let the sweet hope that Thou art mine
My life and death attend,
Thy presence through my journey shine,
And crown my journey's end.

Of such instances I find, in the *Prayer Book*, 115 out of 401, the whole number: (401 including the different

parts, or versions, of the same psalm and the glorias). In the *Church Psalmist*, 305 out of 1190. In King David's *Psalms*, 56 out of 150. The proportion, then, might thus be stated :

Church Psalmist, 26 to 100 :
Prayer Book, 28 to 100 :
Bible, 27 to 100.

Class II :—*Meditation combined with Prayer.*

EXAMPLE :—

A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify ;
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky ;

From youth to hoary age,
My calling to fulfil :
O may it all my power engage,
To do my Master's will.

Arm me with jealous care,
As in Thy sight to live,
And O ! Thy servant, Lord, prepare
A strict account to give :

Help me to watch and pray,
And on Thyself rely ;
Assured if I my trust betray,
I shall forever die.

Here, it will be observed, the first two verses are of a meditative character, while the third commences a direct appeal. According to the view presented in a preceding chapter, this whole hymn would come under the denomination of *worship* Such hymns (as will be

seen) are numerous in our church collections; the same style prevailing greatly, also, in the Bible psalms. The form is an admirable one. It seems fitting and natural that the mind should sometimes pass through such an outer vestibule of quiet meditation, before entering into the inner temple of worship.

It must be stated, however, that hymns of this character have not always precisely the form of the example given. In some cases of Bible psalms this sacred meditation *interrupts* the direct appeal; or the two, again, frequently alternate.

Of this 2d class, I find in the *Church Psalmist*, 164 instances out of 1190:—in the *Prayer Book*, 56 out of 401:—in the *Bible*, 46 out of 150.

The proportion, then, is the following:

Church Psalmist,	14 to 100:
Prayer Book,	14 to 100:
Bible,	30 to 100.

Class III:—*Exhortation combined with Prayer.*

In presenting this third class, it must be stated, that among hymns called *hortatory*, two distinct classes will be found to exist: namely, those which exhort to repentance, or are an appeal, of some kind, to different classes of individuals; and those which exhort to praise. This style of exhortation, in both forms, will be found to exist alone, and also in combination with other lyrical elements: as for instance above, where exhortation is combined with prayer. Now, inasmuch as the object of this analysis is

to distinguish the devotional element, generally, from the non-devotional, these two forms of exhortation will have to be presented distinctly: for both are not devotional. An exhortation to repent, for instance, has a sermonizing character: while distinguished from this, both in our Church lyrics and in the Bible psalms actual praise of the Divine Being will be found to take the form of an *exhortation* to praise that Being—the act of praise being evidently simultaneous with the exhortation. Under this third class, then, I include psalms and hymns which are an exhortation to *praise*, combined with a definite appeal to heaven: the whole lyric, thus constituted, coming under the denomination of worship.

EXAMPLE:—

From all that dwell below the skies,
Let the Creator's praise arise;
Jehovah's glorious name be sung
Through every land, by every tongue.

Eternal are Thy mercies, Lord,
And truth eternal is Thy word;
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,
Till suns shall rise and set no more.

In this familiar example it will be seen, that the first verse is an exhortation to praise: the act of praise being evidently identical with the exhortation: while a direct appeal commences with the second verse.

The *gloria patri*, in its various forms, in the Episcopal collection, and the doxologies in other collections, are, for the most part, in this hortatory form. But they involve, none the less, an act of positive worship.

Of such instances, I find in the *Church Psalmist*, 46 out of 1190 :—in the *Prayer Book*, 20 out of 401 :—in the *Bible*, 10 out of 150.

The proportion, then, is the following :

Church Psalmist, 4 to 100 :
Prayer Book, 5 to 100 :
Bible, 7 to 100.

Class IV :—*Exhortation* (2) *combined with Prayer.*

Under this class are comprised those hymns in which an appeal of some kind is made to the individual or to the audience, combined also with an appeal to heaven :

EXAMPLE :—

The Saviour calls—let every ear
Attend the heavenly sound ;
Ye doubting souls ! dismiss your fear,
Hope smiles reviving round.

For every thirsty, longing heart,
Here streams of bounty flow,
And life, and health, and bliss impart,
To banish mortal wo.

Ye sinners ! come ; 'tis mercy's voice ;
The gracious call obey ;
Mercy invites to heavenly joys,—
And can you yet delay ?

Dear Saviour ! draw reluctant hearts ;
To Thee let sinners fly,
And take the bliss Thy love imparts,
And drink, and never die.

The form of exhortation contained in the first three verses, plainly distinguishes Class IV. from Class III. The fourth verse commences and closes, it will be observed, with an appeal to heaven. This hymn, then, is only in part devotional; the devotional element being confined to the last verse.

This class of hymns might bear analogy with a sermon, in which the clergyman first makes an appeal to the auditors, and afterwards closes with a prayer. It is, unquestionably, a very useful and effective style of sacred lyric for occasional use where, as in the present instance, an appeal is made to the *feelings*—for which music is so well suited—and not made to the *intellect*, in the shape of abstract doctrinal truth: of which we find so many instances in our Church collections, but for which music is entirely unsuited.

Of such instances, though varying from this somewhat in form, I find in the *Church Psalmist*, 25 out of 1190; in the *Prayer Book*, 5 out of 401; in the *Bible*, 4 out of 150.

The proportion, then, is the following:

Church Psalmist,	2 to 100:
Prayer Book,	1 to 100:
Bible,	3 to 100.

CLASS V:—*Instruction combined with Prayer.*

EXAMPLE:

Vain are the hopes, the sons of men
On their own works have built;—

Their hearts, by nature, all unclean,
And all their actions guilt.

Let Jew and Gentile stop their mouths,
Without a murm'ring word;
And the whole race of Adam stand
Guilty before the Lord.

In vain we ask God's righteous law
To justify us now;
Since to convince, and to condemn,
Is all the law can do.

Jesus! how glorious is Thy grace!—
When in Thy name we trust,
Our faith receives a righteousness
That makes the sinner just.

This hymn in its first three verses is plainly instructive and doctrinal, the same character pervading even the last verse, where an appeal is made to heaven. Not all examples under this class are as coldly didactic; but, in many, the instruction is administered in a warmer form; while the appeal to heaven is also more direct, and indicates less glancing at the audience.

This hymn, it may be remarked, is doubly unfit for music. The irregular accentuation at the commencement of the lines would alone unfit it—unless the hymn were composed throughout, (instead of repeating the same music to every verse,) and the irregularities of accent were especially cared for. But it is otherwise unsuited to music in its very un-emotional character. The only portion of the hymn that appeals to the composer as material for music, is the first line of the last verse; for

here there is a gleam of feeling. Music is emphatically the *language* of feeling: and it is fitted to express or accompany nothing else.

Generally speaking, hymns like these (combining instruction with prayer) involve an act of worship only so far, of course, as their appeal to heaven is concerned. They, also, like a previous class of hymns, may be compared to a short sermon, after which the clergyman offers a brief prayer.

Of such instances, I find in the *Church Psalmist*, 121 out of 1190; in the *Prayer Book*, 29 out of 401; in the *Bible Psalms*, 2 out of 150.

The proportion, therefore, is the following:

Church Psalmist,	10 to 100:
Prayer Book,	7 to 100:
Bible,	1 to 100

The five classes now enumerated include all hymns in which a direct appeal, of any kind, is made to the Supreme Being. We now come to hymns differently constituted.

Class VI:—*Meditation.*

EXAMPLE:—

Although the vine its fruit deny,
The budding fig-tree droop and die,
No oil the olive yield;
Yet will I trust me in my God,
Yea, bend rejoicing to His rod,
And by His grace be heal'd.

Though fields in verdure once array'd,
By whirlwinds desolate be laid,
Or parch'd by scorching beam;
Still in the Lord shall be my trust,
My joy; for though His frown is just,
His mercy is supreme.

Though from the fold the flock decay,
Though herds lie famish'd o'er the lea,
And round the empty stall;
My soul above the wreck shall rise,
Its better joys are in the skies;
There God is all in all.

In God my strength, howe'er distrest,
I yet will hope, and calmly rest,
Nay, triumph in His love.
My ling'ring soul, my tardy feet,
Free as the hind he makes, and fleet,
To speed my course above.

This style of meditative hymn possesses, according to the view given, the character of worship.

Of such instances, I find in the *Church Psalmist*, 44 out of 1190:—in the *Prayer Book*, 12 out of 401:—in the *Bible*, 3 out of 150.

The proportion, then, is the following:

Church Psalmist, 1 to 100:
Prayer Book, 3 to 100:
Bible, 2 to 100.

CLASS VII :—*Meditation combined with Exhortation.* (1)

EXAMPLE :—

There is a God!—all nature speaks,
  Through earth and air, and sea and skies;
See!—from the clouds His glory breaks,
  When earliest beams of morning rise!

The rising sun, serenely bright,
  Throughout the world's extended frame,
Inscribes in characters of light,
  His mighty Maker's glorious name.

Ye curious minds, who roam abroad,
  And trace creation's wonders o'er!
Confess the footsteps of your God;
  Bow down before him and adore.

The first two stanzas, here, are of a meditative character, while the last is an exhortation to worship. Both in meditation and exhortation this hymn is one of worship.

Of such instances, I find in the *Church Psalmist*, 6 out of 1190 :—in the *Prayer Book*, 7 out of 401 :—in the *Bible*, 7 out of 150.

The proportion, then, is the following:

Church Psalmist, 1 to 200:
Prayer Book, 2 to 100:
Bible, 5 to 100.

CLASS VIII :—*Meditation combined with Exhortation.* (2)

EXAMPLE :—

In all my Lord's appointed ways,
My journey I'll pursue;
Hinder me not,—ye much loved saints!
For I must go with you.

Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,
I'll follow where he goes;
Hinder me not, shall be my cry,
Though earth and hell oppose.

And when my Saviour calls me home,
Still this my cry shall be,—
Hinder me not—come, welcome, death!
I'll gladly go with thee.

In this hymn the first two lines of the verse have a meditative character, while the last two are hortatory. But this exhortation, unlike that of the former class, is not addressed heavenward, but to man. The entire hymn can be considered devotional only so far as the two lines of meditation in each stanza and the pious resolves make it so.

Of such instances, I find in the *Church Psalmist*, 9 out of 1190 :—in the *Prayer Book*, 4 out of 401 :—in the *Bible*, none.

The proportion, then, is the following :

Church Psalmist,	1 to 100 :
Prayer Book,	1 to 100 :
Bible,	none.

Class IX :—*Exhortation.* (1)

EXAMPLE :—

With one consent let all the earth
To God their cheerful voices raise;
Glad homage pay with awful mirth,
And sing before him songs of praise:

Convinced that He is God alone,
From whom both we and all proceed;
We whom He chooses for His own,
The flocks that He vouchsafes to feed.

O enter then his temple-gate,
Thence to his courts devoutly press;
And still your grateful hymns repeat,
And still his name with praises bless.

For he's the Lord, supremely good,
His mercy is forever sure;
His truth, which always firmly stood,
To endless ages shall endure.

In this familiar psalm we have an exhortation to praise the Supreme Being: the exhortation evidently involving the *act* of praise—being identical with it. A hymn of worship.

Of such instances, I find in the *Church Psalmist*, 76 out of 1190 :—in the *Prayer Book*, 41 out of 401 :—in the *Bible*, 16 out of 150.

The proportion, then, is the following :

Church Psalmist, 6 to 100 :
Prayer Book, 10 to 100 :
Bible, 11 to 100.

Class X:—*Exhortation.* (2)

EXAMPLE:—

Let party-names no more
The Christian world o'erspread;
Gentile and Jew, and bond and free,
Are one, in Christ, their head.

Among the saints on earth,
Let mutual love abound;—
Heirs of the same inheritance,
With mutual blessings crowned.

Thus will the church below
Resemble that above;
Where streams of endless pleasure flow,
And every heart is love.

This second form of exhortation is plainly distinguishable from the former, and involves no act of worship—it is not addressed heavenward, but to man.

Of such instances, I find in the *Church Psalmist*, 65 out of 1190:—in the *Prayer Book*, 10 out of 401:—in the *Bible*, none.

The proportion, then, is the following:

Church Psalmist,	5 to 100:
Prayer Book,	2 to 100:
Bible,	none.

CLASS XI :—*Instruction.*

EXAMPLE :—

The law by Moses came,
  But peace and truth and love
Were brought by Christ, a nobler name,
  Descending from above.

Amidst the house of God,
  Their different works were done ;
Moses a faithful servant stood,
  But Christ a faithful Son.

Then to his new commands
  Be strict obedience paid ;
O'er all his Father's house he stands,
  The sovereign and the head.

The man who durst despise
  The law that Moses brought—
Behold ! how terribly he dies
  For his presumptuous fault.

But sorer vengeance falls
  On that rebellious race,
Who hate to hear when Jesus calls,
  And dare resist His grace.

A purely instructive hymn. The unfitness of so coldly didactic a hymn for music, cannot but be apparent.

Of somewhat less positive instances, I find in the *Church Psalmist*, 110 out of 1190 :—in the *Prayer Book*, 28 out of 401 :—in the *Bible*, 3 out of 150.

The proportion, then, is the following :

Church Psalmist,	9 to 100 :
Prayer Book,	7 to 100 :
Bible,	2 to 100.

CLASS XII :—*Instruction combined with Exhortation.* (1)

EXAMPLE :—

Would you behold the works of God,
His wonders in the world abroad?
Go with the mariners, and trace
The unknown regions of the seas.

They leave their native shores behind,
And seize the favors of the wind :
Till God commands,—and tempests rise,
That heave the ocean to the skies.

When land is far, and death is nigh,
Lost to all hope, to God they cry ;
His mercy hears their loud address,
And sends salvation in distress.

Oh ! may the sons of men record
The wondrous goodness of the Lord.
Let them their private offerings bring,
And in the church His glory sing.

The first three verses here are instructive, while the last contains an exhortation to worship : the devotional element being confined to this exhortation in the last verse.

Of such instances, I find in the *Church Psalmist*, 114 out of 1190 :—in the *Prayer Book*, 25 out of 401 :—in the *Bible Psalms*, 7 out of 150.

The proportion, then, is the following :

Church Psalmist,	10 to 100 :
Prayer Book,	6 to 100 :
Bible,	5 to 100.

CLASS XIII.—*Instruction combined with Exhortation.* (2)

EXAMPLE :—

Not to condemn the sons of men,
  Did Christ, the Son of God appear;
No weapons in his hands are seen,
  No flaming sword, nor thunder there.

Such was the pity of our God,
  He loved the race of man so well,
He sent His son to bear our load
  Of sins, and save our souls from hell.

Sinners! believe the Saviour's word,
  Trust in His mighty name and live;
A thousand joys his lips afford,
  His hands a thousand blessings give.

Here, again, we have an instructive and hortatory hymn. But the exhortation in the last verse is to repentance, not to devotion.

Of such instances, I find in the *Church Psalmist*, 24 out of 1190 :—in the *Prayer Book*, 7 out of 401 :—in the *Bible Psalms*, none.

The proportion, then, is :

Church Psalmist,	2 to 100 :
Prayer Book,	2 to 100 :
Bible,	none.

CLASS XIV :—*Narration.*

EXAMPLE :—

'Tis midnight—and, on Olive's brow,
The star is dimmed that lately shone ;
'Tis midnight—in the garden now
The suffering Saviour prays alone.

'Tis midnight—and from all removed,
Immanuel wrestles lone, with fears ;
E'en the disciple that He loved
Heeds not his master's grief and tears.

'Tis midnight—and for other's guilt
The man of sorrows weeps in blood ;
Yet he, who hath in anguish knelt,
Is not forsaken by his God.

'Tis midnight—and from other plains,
Is borne the song that angels know ;
Unheard by mortals are the strains
That sweetly soothe the Saviour's wo.

Of such instances, I find in the *Church Psalmist*, 9 out of 1190 :—in the *Prayer Book*, 5 out of 401 :—in the *Bible*, none.

The proportion, then, is :

Church Psalmist, 4 to 500 :
Prayer Book, 1 to 100 :
Bible, none.

These 14 classes complete the classification, so far as there are enough instances to form a distinct class.

The omitted psalms and hymns, in the three collections examined, are very few in number, and combine, variously, the elements already enumerated. These combinations are the following :—

Instruction-exhortation-prayer : of which are found in the *Church Psalmist*, 9 instances :—in the *Prayer Book*, 5 :—in the *Bible*, none.

Meditation-instruction-exhortation : of which are found in the *Church Psalmist*, 1 :—in the *Prayer Book*, 1 :—in the *Bible*, none.

Narration-exhortation : in the *Church Psalmist*, none : —*Prayer Book*, none :—in the *Bible*, 3.

Meditation-exhortation-prayer : in the *Church Psalmist*, none :—*Prayer Book*, none :—*Bible*, 2.

The analysis of the three collections of sacred song being completed, we can now accurately ascertain the amount of devotional element contained in them, and the extent to which their contents involve actual *worship*. As the *Church Psalmist* and *Prayer Book* are doubtless (as has been said) fair exponents of the collections in general use, this result may stand for our entire psalmody and hymnody, while the *Bible Psalms* (in contrast) will stand for themselves.

The following table of proportions, combined from the preceding classification, will show, at a glance, the result attained.

PURELY DEVOTIONAL.

[Class 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9.]

Church Psalmist, 53 to 100:
Prayer Book, 63 to 100:
Bible Psalms, 92 to 100.

INSTRUCTIVE AND DEVOTIONAL.

[Class 4, 5, 8, 12.]

Church Psalmist, 23 to 100:
Prayer Book, 15 to 100:
Bible, 8 to 100.

PURELY INSTRUCTIVE.

[Class 10, 11, 13, 14.]

Church Psalmist, 17 to 100:
Prayer Book, 12 to 100:
Bible, 2 to 100.

CHAPTER IX.

COMMENTS

1. The foregoing result conclusively shows, that, viewed not only in the light of correct judgment, but in direct comparison with the model-collection of sacred song afforded us in inspired scripture, our psalms and hymns PREACH TOO MUCH AND PRAISE TOO LITTLE.

Observe the extraordinary disproportion of devotional element, as contained in the Bible psalms and our Church collections !—and mark how, as we recede from praise and fall into preaching, the Bible psalms recede from us—or rather, we recede from the Bible. There is no question, I think, that the PRAISE OF OUR CREATOR, which is the legitimate office of sacred, churchly song, has been withdrawn from that Supreme Object, to give place, in far too great a measure, to preaching and instruction: thus, doing violence, first to musical art, by forcing it into a service for which it is entirely unfitted, (to instruct and to indoctrinate,) and second, trespassing upon the peculiar office of the clergyman and the sacred desk, whence instruction and exposition are expected naturally to proceed.

2. It would seem, from the above table of comparison, that the *Prayer Book* collection possesses in a much

greater degree the devotional element than the *Church Psalmist.*

Since the Prayer Book collection was made, the resources of sacred song have been exceedingly enhanced; and many later collections, like the *Church Psalmist*, possess finer hymns: and yet, there is no doubt that the *Prayer Book* collection, (though still far removed from the Bible standard,) more prominently keeps in view the object of worship: and it begins to be a question, whether fine poetry has not been secured at the expense of true devotion. That there is nothing incompatible in the two is admirably shown in the Psalms of David. Hence the duty which is suggested, of a reform in all our Church collections at the hand of some competent person, who will combine, to a far greater extent than has yet been done, the best poetry with the purest devotion.

3. A curious fact has been elicited by this investigation as to one result of attempting to versify and force into rhyme the Psalms of David. On comparing the versified psalms with the originals, *the result shows a far less degree of the devotional element in the versification than in the original.*

This fact is proved by the following tables, in which the versified psalms (distinctly from the hymns) of the *Church Psalmist* and the *Prayer Book* are compared with the Bible originals:—

PURELY DEVOTIONAL.

Church Psalmist,	55 to 100:
Prayer Book,	58 to 100:
Bible,	92 to 100.

INSTRUCTIVE AND DEVOTIONAL.

Church Psalmist, 27 to 100:
Prayer Book, 19 to 100:
Bible, 2 to 100.

PURELY INSTRUCTIVE.

Church Psalmist, 12 to 100:
Prayer Book, 12 to 100:
Bible, 2 to 100.

How shall we account for this strange result?—it is here positively shown, that, in the process of versifying, the psalms have deteriorated in devotional tone and character to a remarkable degree:—that the purely devotional psalms in the Bible, which are in the proportion of 92 to 100, sink in the *Prayer Book* versification to the proportion of 58 to 100, and in the *Church Psalmist* versification to 55 to 100:—that, on the other hand, the instructive-and-devotional psalms of the Bible, which are only in the proportion of 8 to 100, increase in the *Prayer Book* versification to 19 to 100, and in the *Church Psalmist* to 27 to 100:—and, furthermore, that the purely instructive psalms of the Bible, which are only in the proportion of 2 to 100, increase both in the *Prayer Book* and the *Church Psalmist* to 12 to 100.

What a substitution of preaching for praise do we find here!

And how shall this result be explained? To some extent, perhaps, an explanation may be given. A rhyming and versifying process would naturally change the charac-

ter of a psalm. Qualifying adjectives and expletives of all kinds, thrown in to complete a line, together with the change of words, generally, are attempts fraught with danger to the original. This, no doubt, instigated the Scotch version of the psalms, where the aim is to retain, so far as possible, the words of the original. But, although this particular aim may have been partially accomplished, and the danger of a change of sense to some extent averted, the danger to King David's *poetry* was very disastrously incurred—judging by the result.

It seems strange, however, that in the process of versifying, the spirit and aim of a psalm should be so essentially changed, that what, in the original, is a devotional appeal to heaven, is transformed in the hand of the versifier to a mere moral reflection addressed to the audience! I will give a single short example of this—not the best or most obvious one that can be found, perhaps, but the first that offers. The 5th psalm is devotional throughout: being addressed to the Supreme Being, or evidently rehearsed in his presence. The last verse is the following:—

"For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favor wilt thou compass him as with a shield."

VERSIFIED.

To righteous men, the righteous Lord
His blessings will extend:
And with His favor all His Saints
As with a shield defend.

(*Prayer Book, Psalm 5th.*)

The language of David is that of prayerful assurance—The language of the versifier is—such as we read it: a

didactic statement of a *fact;* addressed apparently to the audience: a turning earth-ward, just at the climax of the prayer, instead of closing, as David does, in consistent unity with the preceding verses,—prayerfully and appealingly to heaven.

Another explanation of the singular result here presented is the following. I find in sacred writ but three purely instructive psalms—the 1st, the 127th and the 128th—and these are among the shortest psalms of the Bible. Now, in our collections we have often many versifications of the same psalm—as we have many versified psalms composed from one long original psalm. We therefore find, for instance, that where the Bible gives us but one instructive *first* psalm, in the *Church Psalmist* we have the same *four* times—variously versified. Where the Bible gives us but one 127th instructive psalm, we have it three times—variously versified.

Now, it would appear probable, that in the general multiplication of psalms by versification, the instructive and the devotional psalms, and parts of psalms, would be equally multiplied. But this seems, by the result presented, not to be the case:—and the fact remains as before, of an apparently strong proclivity in our versifiers to preaching and instruction, and an unwarrantable departure from the devotional sense of the Bible.

4. The conclusion, then, it seems to me, is irresistibly forced upon us by the result thus presented, that the versifiers of the psalms, though rendering good service to such extent as they have furnished a collection of many fine sacred lyrics *based upon* the psalms, *have more harmed than helped* the cause of sacred song in the Christian

Church, by making these a *substitute* for the original psalms. The psalms should unquestionably be sung just as they stand, in the admirable form of the *chant*. When we see to how successful an extent not only a choir, but a whole congregation, can chant entire psalms, as in the Church of the Holy Communion, (Rev. Dr. Muhlenberg,) New-York, there seems to be no excuse for using anything less admirable or devotional than the language of Holy Writ. Let the versified psalms remain in use if need be: there are many most excellent lyrics among them, and no sacred poetry could have a better basis, surely, than the Bible Psalms: many of these also are endeared to the Christian Church by long and hallowed association: let them remain then, only,—let us not make these a *substitute* for *original* psalms in our worship—an office which they are by no means fitted to fill. For my own part, I would select the best of the metrical psalms, consider them as *based upon the psalms*, attach to them the number of the psalm from which they are taken, and incorporate them among the regular collection of *hymns*: and then, for our psalms, use the original Psalms of David: so that when we say *psalms* and *hymns*, we literally mean *psalms*, and not an imitation,—or a dilution of them. The advantages gained by thus being able, from the rapidity of articulation possible in the chant, to sing an entire psalm, as David meant it to be sung, thus securing its *unity*, would be great and manifold: most sensibly felt, perhaps, in instructive psalms: for, it will be found that David rarely, if ever, wrote a psalm of this description, without incorporating into it, somewhere in its progress, the element of devotion, and raising a devout eye to heaven. Sing-

ing, therefore, the entire psalm, the Almighty would not miss of that worship and recognition, which David *meant He should have when that psalm was sung*—an intent entirely foiled by the versifier, who cuts out the devotion and gives us only the instructive portion to sing. Instruction combined with prayer may be effectual: but who can say that instruction alone, with the omitted prayer, shall prove so?

In the preface of a chant-book, published some time since by the late Bishop Wainwright and Dr. Muhlenberg, in which the psalms are arranged for singing, I find the following remark with regard to versified psalms used in the Prayer Book:—"The rubric does not *enjoin*, but simply *allows* their use; and therefore the metre psalms and hymns are bound in the same volume with the Prayer Book only for convenience sake." In this remark, as indeed by the whole preface, the use of versified psalms in the Episcopal Church as a substitute for the original, is thus discouraged. I cannot but think, that the worshippers of all Christian denominations will eventually be of the same mind as to the use of the original psalms, in their beauty, unity and completeness; unshorn of their strength and poetry, and—still more important—unaverted from the Supreme Object of their service.

A task, it seems to me, for some competent hand yet to perform, is a collection of psalms and hymns for church use, in which the psalms shall be the incomparable originals, (wholly or in part,) divided or *pointed* for chanting, and the hymns shall be the (poetically) best effusions of sacred song, and selected from the outpourings of *devotional hearts*—rather than instructive heads.

CHAPTER X.

WEDDING MUSIC TO VERSE.

Whatever is not of an emotional character is unfitted for music. In support of this position, I propose to offer a short argument.

Music is a language of the emotions: not of the intellect. It cannot express thought: it can only suggest it. We cannot say, "It is a fine day," in music. But, when listening to an instrumental piece, like a sonata or symphony of Beethoven, a parallel course of thought may be immediately *suggested* by the music.

Music may be said to combine in itself an *expressive* power: a *suggestive* power; and an *imitative* power.

The capacity of music as an *expressive* power, is confined to the feelings. Even here it is vague in particulars, but tolerably definite in general tone. Melancholy; cheerfulness; contrition; despair; tranquillity; and perhaps other more delicate shades of feeling may, with a definiteness sufficient to be recognized, be expressed in tones, without the aid of words. *Vague* feelings of the most subtle and delicate character, (too indistinct and shadowy to be expressed in words,) can indefinitely be expressed in tones.

In its power to *suggest* thought, and dreams, and varied

fancies and lofty imaginings, music far transcends the power of words. The *suggestive* power of an instrumental symphony, like one of Beethoven for instance, surpasses all reach of words; and the listener arises from such a symphony as from communings with other thought-worlds —from which he emerges as from a trance. The German school of music generally, it may be remarked, occupies this sphere of art in its instrumentalism, which is so superior to its vocal music: because (perhaps) in the latter it is limited by the sense of words. Whereas the Italian school concerns itself chiefly with the feelings—and perhaps too much with the feelings in their passional and lower forms.

In its inferior, *imitative* power, music can also present distinct images. The thunder-storm, the song of birds, the rippling of water; also things of vision, like the tremulousness of light; can, with considerable fidelity, be presented in tones.

These three powers, then,—an *expressive*, a *suggestive*, an *imitative*, would seem to be inherent in music.

In wedding music to poetry, therefore, we have in the former a language peculiarly of feeling, but combining also a suggestive and imitative power; and in the latter, a language of both thought and feeling. Each of these two is independent of the other, and has its own peculiar mode of expression and working sphere.

Now, in a combination of the two, when is the union natural and effective, and when is it unnatural and ineffective? Under what conditions will the two harmoniously blend to accomplish one and the same purpose?—for, a simultaneous union of any other two languages, like

Latin and Greek, would produce jargon; here, both are languages of thought; and though the *same* thought were expressed simultaneously in both languages, the difference of words and of grammatical structure would neutralize it to the ear. Just so it might be in a union of music and poetry. Each *must have its peculiar function to perform*, and the two functions must be of a character to harmonize—or the result is nothing but confusion.

Now, it will be conceded, that where music is linked with poetry, the poetry furnishes the *theme*—whether it be joy or sorrow, or love or melancholy. The *thought*-service, then, is performed by the words: the peculiar office of music, therefore, is to express the feeling of joy; the feeling of sorrow; the feeling of love or melancholy. The words express the thought—the music the feeling. For, although the words may be also expressive of feeling, the music undertakes this peculiar task of expression:—it intensifies the words by a vivid and glowing portrayal of whatever emotions they may involve. Sometimes, also, one of music's other powers is called into play—its *imitative*. In Beethoven's *Adelaide*, for instance, where the poet alludes to the nightingale, the note of the nightingale is imitated in the music. Two functions of music, therefore, its expressive and imitative, in this song are brought into play: its third function is superseded by the words, which give the theme of the song, and the *thoughts* developed upon this theme.

This third function of music, it may be remarked, has in vocal music an appropriate sphere of action in all interjected, instrumental interludes; like those between the verses of church hymns, where the interludes should *sug-*

gest thoughts in unison with those which have just been uttered by the words, or (anticipatingly) with those which immediately follow in the succeeding verse—plainly distinguished thus from those unmeaning interludes, in which neither the thought nor the feeling of the preceding verse is at all regarded, but a frivolous and irrelevant music-phrase is thrown in, entirely foreign to the subject and the occasion.

To express, in a word then, the service music has to render when wedded with words—besides articulating them, and now and then imitating the objects or images they present—it gives expression to whatever *feeling* the words may contain. If music has not *this* to do, when wedded with poetry, then it has *nothing* to do: and it is an unmeaning and hindering accompaniment of words—it is Latin and Greek articulated in the same breath. And here we find, as we think, the principle which governs, or should govern the selection of words for music; and which we stated at the outset: namely, that

WHATEVER IS NOT OF AN EMOTIONAL CHARACTER IS UNFITTED FOR MUSIC.

Words need not, of course, necessarily involve feeling; poetry need not involve this element. It is such words, or such poetry, therefore, as do *not* involve this, but are purely a language of the intellect with which music is *falsely wedded*—where it has no meaning, and can serve for nothing but to interrupt.

But I would here say, that music, in two of its forms, seems to meet a less emotional, or non-emotional, character of words, *half way*. These are, the chant and the recitative—which are the lowest forms of musical utterance.

They involve, simply, a kind of musical declamation: and have been advantageously applied both in secular and sacred art.

David's psalms were doubtless sung in a reciting or chanting style. Hence, a length in some of them which is impracticable in slower versification; and hence, doubtless, a didactic character of words in some instances, which, not conflicting with mere musical declamation, very much conflicts with the higher and warmer forms of musical expression.

As in versifying the psalms, then, we made many of them as to their *unity* impracticable, so we have rendered the more didactic passages of them—practicable enough in musical recitation—impracticable as lyrical elements for warmer musical expression. We return thus to the previous obvious necessity—of singing, or rather chanting the psalms just as they stand.

In secular art we have special occasion to see the folly of attempting to set purely prosaic language, where not the slightest feeling in involved, to music. For when, in opera, (particularly in English opera,) one person on the stage tells another to "shut the door," or "pick up his hat," with a flourish of high sounding music, if common sense do not rebel, it is because the ludicrousness of the thing must have overcome all considerations of common sense.

Sacred and secular art, operatic and church music, have surely yet to be sifted, as to words which are proper to be *sung*, and words which are only proper to be *said*.

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The principle herewith evolved, then, can now be applied to church music as wedded with church poetry. We have

seen in the former chapter on this subject, that a large number of our church hymns are of a purely instructive, doctrinal, or otherwise didactic character, and *entirely unfit for music.* Such hymns are addressed to the intellect, not the feelings. Music has nothing to do with the intellect. For though it has the power of suggesting thought, it cannot do so when the words themselves, with which it is wedded, put a definite thought into the mind. This suggestive power of music only comes in play when disconnected with all words: when it appeals to the intellect or thought-power, *through the emotions or sensations which it excites*—for in this way does music address itself to the intellect.

Now, as regards doctrinal hymns, or instructive hymns of any kind, it is willingly conceded, that if they can be expressed in such a way as to appeal to the feelings, as well as the intellect, music may well accompany them; for they thus become emotional, and meet the requirements of music; they give music something to express: which something is, of course, the very feeling they involve. For instance, in a doctrine like that of the atonement, we can conceive of a hymn being written of an exceedingly emotional character, which should yet clearly and completely present the doctrine itself. Doubtless, much doctrine is incidentally conveyed in hymns of feeling: for, after all, the whole rescue of our race is based upon Bible facts, which we call doctrines; but these facts had their origin in a *heart*—which is the Eternal Love. It would seem possible, and proper therefore, that, when intended for music, doctrinal thought should be presented not only in an intellectual, but an emotional form.

But, what shall music do with, or for, such stanzas of a church psalm as the following:—

Fools in their hearts believe and say,
That all religion's vain;
There is no God who reigns on high,
Or minds th' affairs of men.

The Lord from His celestial throne,
Looked down on things below,
To find the man who sought His grace,
Or did his justice know.

By nature all are gone astray,
Their practice all the same;
There's none that fears his Maker's hand,
There's none that loves His name.

Their tongues are used to speak deceit,
Their slanders never cease:
How swift to mischief are their feet!
Nor know the paths of peace.

Such seeds of sin—the bitter root—
In every heart are found;
Nor can they bear diviner fruit,
Till grace refines the ground.

We have here Dr. Watt's versification of the 14th psalm. It may be well to present the original psalm, in order to compare the two:—

PSALM XIV.

To the Chief Musician, a Psalm of David.

The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt; they have done abominable works; *There is* none that doeth good.

The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God.

They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy; *There is* none that doeth good, no, not one.

Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord.

There were they in great fear: For God *is* in the generation of the righteous.

Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor; Because the Lord *is* his refuge.

Oh, that the salvation of Israel *were come* out of Zion! When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

In this psalm, as in almost every other, David does not close without some outburst of feeling, some warm aspiration, some lifting of a prayerful thought to heaven—even although the psalm may not be of a purely devotional character—as the great majority of psalms are. In the versification, the first three verses evidently follow the original text. The 4th and 5th, however, are quite extemporized, and the last verse of the original text, which contains the very emotional element sought by music, and which forms the climax of the psalm, *is omitted altogether*! Now, granted that a psalm must often be curtailed on account of its length; in a choice of materials, ought not, if possible, all the general elements of a psalm to be embodied? at all events, if some, or even *one*, be omitted, should that *one* be the very element which is peculiarly adapted to musical expression, when it is this which is aimed at in the versification? One cannot but feel, in comparing the two versions here given, how much better it would have been, had a glowing versification of the last

Bible stanza taken the place of the two gratuitously doctrinal verses appended by the poet; or rather, one cannot help feeling how much better were the psalm sung exactly as it is written. Is not this another illustration of what we have before said, "that the versifiers of the psalms, though rendering good service to such extent as they have furnished many fine sacred lyrics *based* upon the psalms, have more harmed than helped the cause of sacred song in making these a *substitute* for the originals."

Between poetry intended for music, and poetry not intended, a broad distinction should be made—for music involves the necessity of feeling: poetry does not. Instrumental music is occasionally written which seems to appeal to the imagination mainly, and involves little feeling. Some of Mendelssohn's orchestral music is of this character. But the ear cannot long delight in a coldly imaginative music. There must be warmth—a heart in music, or it is lifeless. In this respect music differs from poetry. Poetry is a language of independent, intelligible thought as well as feeling. Poetry therefore—if poets will—can be made a vehicle of instruction and abstract teaching. Oftentimes, from the metrical form of poetry, and the facility with which it impresses itself upon the memory, it may seem desirable to embody certain fundamental truths, or useful facts, in rhyme, for the sake of fixing them permanently in the mind. Particularly is this of use in the case of young people and children. But when you come to set this rhyme to music, the case is different. Music cannot express, or help express, abstract thought—unless you mean by music an utterly senseless jingle.

As a matter of *possibility* music may be set to anything :—

> Thirty days hath September,
> April, June and November, etc

though not a highly impassioned, is certainly a very useful little poem ; and the poet who rhymed it would have his immortality of praise from all treacherous memories—if he were known. This verse might be sung. In like manner might we sing the multiplication table or the Declaration of Independence. But where shall we find the composer who would set it to music, or who would like to listen to it after it were set ?

Schiller, in a charming poetic fable, represents a burly rustic as purchasing on a market-day of a poor and needy poet his fiery and flying steed Pegasus, and yoking him in with a field-ox for duty. The antics Pegasus thereupon performs, and the entire failure of the attempt, at last, are graphically depicted. Prose is a sturdy ox, and fully capable of drawing on the ponderous doctrines of total depravity, necessity of sin, predestination, and the perseverance of the saints—if need be. Let then the car of abstract doctrine be drawn by the sturdy ox Prose. But let our holy emotions, our thankfulness, our gratitude, ascend, as on winged steeds—on the wings of music and poetry—to heaven. The sermon is surely the proper medium for plain statement of fact and abstract truth—not the hymn.

It would seem exceedingly desirable, that our church lyrics, not only as to subject-matter, but *length*, should more fully meet the requirements of music and lyric verse. We cannot but think that our hymns are too long, and that

they do not possess that unity which is so desirable in lyric poetry. The lyric is best used as the out-gush of some single feeling which, as the top-wave of sensibility, is taken by music as it breaks and borne still higher—for music begins where words cease. The feeling therefore should be pointed and definite. Two conflicting emotions cannot be combined at the same moment: neither can the climax of feeling be of long duration.

But, instead of this necessary unity, we have hymns in which now the Deity is addressed—now the audience—now the single individual: single hymns, where now a prayer is commenced—now a crumb of doctrine let fall—now a moral reflection. And instead of a befitting brevity, we have hymns of six, eight, twelve, fifteen and more stanzas!

Four verses of the ordinary four-line length, or two of eight, are certainly enough for any ordinary hymn, and when the gloria or doxology is appended, three are better than four. This limitation is particularly true in all music of the choral form, like Old Hundred or Dundee. In music of a rapid, chanting movement, a verse or two more might conveniently be added.

The irresistible yawning which is frequently observed to set in, from sheer exhaustion of the vocal muscles on the part of the choir, and of the attention on the part of the congregation, is an expressive commentary upon six or eight stanzas of Dundee or Old Hundred. I should think, moreover, that clergymen, whom the length of the hymns and rambling character of their thought chiefly concern, and who suffer so much inconvenience from being obliged to pick out, here and there, such verses as suit their

purpose, would long since have taken some step in this matter.

Another troublesome defect of our church hymns, and one that springs from the fact that their authors are more poets than musicians, is their great irregularity of accent. Musical poetry, and poetry written for music, are two very different things. A change in the accent of poetry is occasionally necessary to break the monotony—it is not only no defect, but a positive beauty, skilfully introduced. If there be anything tiresome in Pope's poetry, it is the inevitable fall of his accent; which goes on, page after page, with even monotony. The occasional interruption of poetic accent is the pleasing dissonance, which, as in music, spices the melody. The stones in the bed of the brook make its music the sweeter.

But musical accent, although as facile as that of poetry, cannot be changed where, as in the church hymns, the same music is sung to each stanza. The composer willingly takes the accentuation of the first verse just where the poet chooses to place it, regular or irregular, and composes accordingly. But, in the second and following verses, if the same music be sung, no variation from this given accent can be made, without reconstructing the melody. If a hymn be composed *throughout*, the accent of course can fall where it will, and the composer can follow. But take, for instance, the following Psalm, (58th Prayer Book.)

> **Thine is the cheerful day, O Lord;**
> **Thine the return of night;**
> **Thou hast prepared the glorious sun,**
> **And every feebler light.**

By Thee the borders of the earth
In perfect order stand ;
The summer's warmth and winter's cold
Attend on Thy command.

The poet here chooses to place in the first verse an accent on the first syllable of the first three lines, instead of the second syllable, where the regular accent of the verse would fall. Music has no objection to this: it could be sung as pleasantly as it reads. But music does object, and so does rhetoric, to such an italicised accentuation of words as we see in the second verse—which must inevitably follow when the melody of the first verse is applied thereto.

This defect is exceedingly prevalent in our church poetry. One can scarcely sing a hymn in which this conflict of measure does not take place, and in which violence is not done both to the ear and to common sense by some absurd fall of the accent. Those who write sacred poetry, and those who select it for use, ought surely to understand, that the accent must positively be regular, in verses sung to a repeated musical phrase, like our church hymns.

There are a great many beautiful hymns of very irregular accent—and among the least of these are certainly not those of Dr. Watts. Such instances will serve an admirable purpose when the time arrives (which we hope is not far distant) that more of our hymns shall be taken in hand by men of true genius for musical composition, and composed throughout, in some such form as that of the motet, with every adaptation to accent, sentiment, and delicate shade of feeling in the successive verses. Such hymns can then artistically be sung by well-trained choirs as an impres-

sive style of church music; clearly distinguished from the congregational, devotional style, inasmuch as the music of the latter is necessarily limited to a very simple, repeated melody, and performed in rude outline, only, as to expression; its massive proportions rejecting (like a statue) the smaller effects of coloring: such as are imparted by the various *pianos*, *crescendos*, *diminuendos*, etc., of the choir style.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE TREATMENT OF WORDS IN MUSIC.

Of two associated persons one will almost always control and subordinate the other:—and a union in art is very like any other union. Thus, in wedding music to poetry, the music may be subordinate to the poetry, or the poetry to the music.

This subordination is shown in treatment of the words. Instances of both styles of treatment may be cited. Poetry is made subordinate to music, for instance, to a great extent in opera: where it is not required, if the plot be good, that its literature be of a superior quality. The words are secondary: they merely give the plot of the opera and then serve as a means of articulation. Indeed, the dramatic action is often made to present the story much more vividly than the words: and an expressive pantomime frequently makes the words superfluous.

Thus it often happens that the text of an opera is thrown exceedingly into the background. Italian opera is the prevailing style upon the stage of the world; and of the thousands who listen to it, but very few understand the native Italian: whilst the translated libretto which is put into the hands of the public, is generally such excessive trash, considered as poetry, that no one ever thinks of read-

ing it, except for the purpose of becoming informed as to the plot. The text of Mozart's celebrated *Zauberflöte* is quite remarkable for its nonsense—even as to plot: and this splendid work of musical art has always been a monument of what genius, like Mozart's, will accomplish, under the severest poetical difficulties.

Other instances where poetry is subordinated to music, we frequently find in songs. Many songs which are exceedingly popular, would certainly never have gained the popular ear for the excellence of their poetry. Indeed, much music of this character which we listen to in the drawing-room with pleasure, is reconciled to our common sense only because some general feeling, like love,—which is a common sense thing—is intended to be portrayed: and having secured the general subject, we heed not the words so much, [which in the mouths of most singers are exceedingly unintelligible,] but listen to the far better embodiment of the theme in music. Songs which are just the reverse of this in style, will directly be cited.

Still other instances where words are subordinated to tones we find in sacred music—the Hallelujah chorus of Handel, for example. This chorus is written mainly upon this word *Hallelujah*. The constant repetition of this word, intellectually considered, seems preposterous. But, not so—the composer is developing, musically, the theme suggested by the word, *praise to Jehovah*. The word *Hallelujah* having furnished him with a theme, serves, then, only as a means of articulation. The word *Amen* is also often repeated in a way to do violence to common sense, unless one hears in it a strong affirmation of the

sentiment which has preceded, forced emphatically home by the music.

People often ridicule this repetition of words in music. But there is philosophy in it—musical philosophy. The words, for the moment, are subordinated to the tones, and made to subserve merely the purposes of articulation. Music is the language of feeling. If, then, an opera or a song contain vivid and varied feeling, the music seizes the emotion whatever it may be at the moment, love—jealousy—fear—indignation, &c.—and developes it, without reference to the fact whether this emotion be well expressed in the words, or not. The words give the theme only; which is *developed musically.*

In this sense, then, are words subordinated to music.

But music is, in very many instances, subordinated to poetry, both in the secular and sacred style. Of the former, we find a marked instance in Moore's songs: particularly in those to which he composed the melody himself. Moore was more a poet than a musician: he wished to be thought this. He was even jealous of music and its reputation; and did not wish to be esteemed a musician. His songs, or rather the Irish melodies, to so many of which his songs are written, are but indifferent music—at least to a cultivated ear, and considered as compositions. Their chief merit is, that by Moore's exquisite and subtle adaptation of his words to their tones, they are made to subserve so admirably the purposes of *clear articulation.* These songs, indeed, have the character of a musical recitation; and possess more rhetorical than musical merit.

Another instance where music is entirely subordinated

to words, is the *recitative;* both in operatic and oratorial composition.

Still another instance is the church chant; in which music plays but an humble part.

More instances might be cited; but these may suffice to show, that, in wedding music to words, one is generally made subservient to the other; and that this inferior service may be rendered *either* by the poetry or the music.

Now, inasmuch as music is oftener composed to poetry than poetry written to music (like Moore's songs to the Irish melodies) it has generally been an optional thing with the composer how he would treat the text—whether subordinate to his musical purpose or not. And yet we cannot but think that there are certain considerations by which the composer should be guided in this matter, and the question decided *when* the text may be subordinated to the music, and when not. For instance, we cannot think that it is an optional matter with the composer how to treat his text in the *devotional* style of music.

Here, music cannot have the pre-eminence and the words be sacrificed to the purposes of mere musical effect, for obvious reasons. Music is not devotion. Can we pray in music?—can we confess our shortcomings and ask for forgiveness in music? Therefore, in addressing directly the Supreme Being, a language of the intellect—the intelligible language of words—cannot be subordinated to a mere language of the feelings, whose signification is so indefinite as is that of music. But this improper subordination takes place, when words embodying a prayer are so treated by the composer as to become an indistinct medley, and all intelligent sequence of thought destroyed,

to those participating in the act of devotion, by "vain repetitions" and involutions of the text.

Aside from a case like this, however, where such solemn interests are involved, the composer can treat the words as he likes; guided only by good taste and by what he thinks will produce the best effect. There are many poems, the words of which are so exquisitely beautiful, that the composer despairs of producing anything more so: and he only attempts so to attach a melody to the words as that they may pleasantly be dwelt on, and made emphatic, and brought more definitely home to the heart and the fancy. Again, there are many poems suitable for music, where the musician thinks he can do better than the poet has done—and accordingly undertakes it.

The composer may also be governed in this matter by the tastes of persons to whom he addresses himself. One person is more poetical than musical: another is more musical than poetical. Hence, one person gives the preference to the poetry, and listens only to that; another person is completely absorbed by the music, and listens only to that. One likes a song because the music is good: another dislikes it because the words are poor. The same fondness for this or that is shown in peoples' preferences for singers: one person likes a singer because he articulates clearly, and he can understand the words: another dislikes him, because although his articulation may be good enough, his voice has no music in it: or, perhaps his style of singing is bad, and, in the matter of articulation, the effort to pronounce the words clearly, injures, to his musical ear, the liquid movement and flow of the music. Thus, a composer may aim at suiting either the one

or the other class of his auditors: and subordinate his music to the words or not, as he pleases. Aside, then, from purposes of devotion, poets and composers can properly decide this question of precedence among themselves: although we suspect there are very few poets who would willingly have their poetry subordinated to music—if they knew what the composer were about.

It may be remarked, that words attain the greatest prominence when each syllable has but one tone. The further a composer departs from this, slurring a single syllable over two, three, four, eight, ten, twenty or more tones—as is done indefinitely in ornate musical composition—the more he subordinates the words to the music: treating the text like a mere means of articulation, and rendering it more and more indistinct. We arrive here, then, at something definite, by which composers may be governed in the devotional style of church music. In chorals, like Old Hundred, Dundee, &c., we have but one tone to a syllable; and in *all* music, composed for purely devotional purposes, each word would best, in a similar manner, have but one tone—except in occasional instances where a slur over two tones (at most three) is unavoidable from the course of the melody and the demands of a musical ear. These instances are not very frequent, and a monosyllabic style of composition may safely be considered as best adapted to devotional purposes.

CHAPTER XII.

MUTILATION OF HYMNS.

Hymns are mutilated in especially *two* prominent ways: first, by solos, duets, etc., in the middle of a stanza: second, by *invariable* interludes between the stanzas themselves.

The first of these cases needs no lengthy illustration. A favorite idea of psalm-tune composers is to have a solo or a duet on the 3d line of a stanza: the other singers stop here, and leave one or two voices to go on with the verse. Judge of the effect of this in the following instances, where I will omit the line ordinarily omitted in such cases:—

EXAMPLE I.

But when we view Thy strange design,
To save rebellious worms,
* * * * * * *
In their divinest forms:—

EXAMPLE II.

God of my mercy and my praise!
Thy glory is my song;
* * * * * * *
With a blaspheming tongue.

The completed stanzas read thus :—

EXAMPLE I.

But when we view Thy strange design
To save rebellious worms,
Where vengeance and compassion join
In their divinest forms :

EXAMPLE II.

God of my mercy and my praise !
Thy glory is my song ;
Though sinners speak against Thy grace
With a blaspheming tongue.

Now, how can we tolerate such an unpardonable interruption of the sense, but by supposing the words entirely subordinated to the music, and used simply for the purposes of articulation—in the manner previously described ? But, in devotional hymns, like those from which these stanzas were taken, it is already decided that this may never be allowed.

In an address to the Supreme Being to stop in the middle of a sentence, and leave others to go on, is an irreverence too marked to require extended comment.

Another instance of this, is in the Episcopal Communion Service, where the following words occur :—

" Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy name, saying"—

Here, in some churches, the congregation, who are re-

peating aloud these words, are suddenly interrupted by the choir, which finishes the sentence thus,

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory," etc.

It is scarcely possible to repress one's impatience on having the words thus taken from the lips, and the mouth thus closed. Indeed, we know not how choirs are authorized in doing this, for the instructions that this passage may be "said or sung," include certainly the *entire* passage,—not an incomplete and fragmentary part of it.

But let us pass from this, to another subject.

A little indignation may well be spent, we think, upon interludes: for we suspect they have been the cause of a vast deal of quiet, though resigned suffering, on the part of many a church-goer, who, supposing it was all right, has never thought of offering any expostulation on the subject.

The playing of interludes between the verses of church hymns, has grown into a great abuse. The interlude has its use, doubtless. Its abuse is heard every Sunday in our churches. Chiefly are interludes abused in strictly devotional hymns: in which, during a direct and consecutive appeal to the Supreme Being, the organist takes occasion to interject, between every verse, a long, rambling, irrelevant musical episode of his own: something disconnected entirely with the preceding sentiment of the verse; a musical flourish, or drawl, *à propos* to nothing, embodying only the vague, straggling fancies of the player's brain. In the meantime the Almighty, (we cannot suppose other-

wise,) awaits the continuation of a prayer—the sense of which has suddenly been interrupted.

At best, there are very few organists who can play an interlude. Interlude-playing implies genius—to a certain extent: just as does extempore playing of any kind. It implies inventive and constructive musical power—the ability of suddenly conceiving and carrying out a musical subject, in an artistic and elegant manner. Few organists are really capable of this. Dull, drawling chords, on each of which the organist portentously pauses, evidently debating what chord to strike next, are not interludes. But even these are preferable to that style of exhibition, where, with a single chord in the left hand as basis, (perhaps a 6-4 chord!) the organist gives scope to his imagination in a series of vaultings, flourishings and trillings with the right hand, as bizarre and disconnected as a Mother-Goose melody.

The legitimate application of interludes is to the ornamental and impressive style of church music. A *very limited* application ought the interlude to have (if any) in the strictly devotional style.

We have made, throughout, in these articles, a distinction between impressive and devotional music. In the first style, it was argued, the words may be subordinated to the music: therefore interludes are here in place: the *general musical effect* being all that is cared for. In the second style, the music must necessarily be *subordinated to the words:* these words being addressed more or less directly to the Supreme Being—where any formal interruption of the sense and the continuous flow of the

thought is not only improper, but, to my own mind, irreverent.

In hymns not embodying the idea of worship—like hortatory hymns—or in any case where the audience are addressed, and not the Supreme Being, interludes may be in place; but here, of course, with intelligent restrictions.

The interlude, in such cases, should always have reference to the preceding (or succeeding) words, and be a continuation or a *development* of the sentiment or feeling of the hymn.

In *length*, an interlude ought to bear some proportion to the verse. Interludes which occupy as much time as the whole verse, or even two lines of a verse, where it is a four line stanza, are, in my opinion, entirely out of proportion. A six or eight line stanza would, of course, warrant a longer interlude than a four, in which an interlude corresponding in length with a single line is ordinarily quite sufficient. A long interlude, and one in which an organist may elaborate his subject and allow himself considerable latitude, is always in place at the close of a hymn on introducing the gloria or a doxology—if such be sung.

A formal interlude is of course always out of place after a verse the sense of which is not completed, and which shows, by the punctuation, that the idea is continued to the succeeding verse. But in the whether-or-no style of interlude playing, how often do we have an elaborate musical phrase introduced exactly between the members of a sentence! For instance:—

EX. I.

Father, whate'er of earthly bliss
Thy sovereign will denies,
Accepted at Thy throne of grace
Let this petition rise:—

(*Long interlude, with full cadence.*)

Give me a calm and thankful heart,
From every murmur free;
The blessings of Thy grace impart,
And make us live to Thee.

EX. II.

My Saviour, whom absent I love,
Whom not having seen I adore,
Whose name is exalted above
All wisdom, dominion and power;

(*Long interlude, as before.*)

Dissolve thou these bonds that detain
My soul from her portion in Thee;
Ah, strike off these adamant chains,
And set me eternally free.

Even if these were not hymns of devotion, where formal interludes in any case were out of place, the introduction of them between two such verses speaks for itself.

In confining the formal interlude to such hymns as do not embody the idea of worship, I would not imply that there should be no pause at all, even between the stanzas

of a devotional hymn. It always sounds badly to break a verse squarely off and commence the next verse squarely again—the organ ceasing, for a moment, between the verses. The organist ought to interweave, as it were, the stanzas of even devotional hymns: not by a formal interlude, which would interrupt and break the sense, but by what I should rather call a *prelude* to the succeeding verse: which prelude may consist of a few running tones, somewhat after the manner of the German interlude; (which, in fact, is properly a prelude.) Such a prelude any organist of ordinary ingenuity can invent on the moment, giving the worshipper a moment's breathing time, and yet not interrupting the sense of the hymn—as would be the case in the long *hiatus* of a formal interlude between the stanzas.

In the formal interlude itself, the organist would do well to bear certain other things in mind, besides these already mentioned as to length, proportion to the stanza, etc. First, to employ this interlude to *change the key* for a moment, and thus to afford the needed musical contrast and relief: and second, to avoid *a constant succession of endings*—or, in musical language, a succession of full cadences. The first thing that young composers and organists have to learn, is to *avoid stopping*;—to *go on*. The gracefully-avoided cadence is an accomplishment in Art, and something every musician ought to acquire. For this reason, an organist who understands what is beautiful in music will try to avoid the tiresome monotony of this constant closing and commencing of four-line tunes, by ending his interlude, not always on the tonica, (thus making still more cadences,) but by leading the interlude

occasionally to the *dominant* chord, and then commencing *the next verse on the tonica*—an inexpressible relief to the ear.

To recapitulate, then—the formal interlude is only truly in place where *music* is the end and aim, and the words are more or less subservient thereto: and this I hold to be the case only in the impressive or ornamental style of church music, and in hymns whose words do not embody the idea of worship.

The formal interlude is *out* of place in a hymn which involves an act of solemn worship and a consecutive address to the Deity. Here, instead of an entire break, the interlude should be superseded by a brief prelude, just enough to lead, gracefully and connectingly, to the next verse—and no more.

Let a few words, touching the number of verses announced from the pulpit, close this chapter.

Our psalms and hymns are, to a great extent, far too long for practicable performance in their *completeness*. They have also, (as has already been said,) so little unity, that a certain number of verses may include all that the clergyman may wish to have read or sung on a given subject.

The defects of our hymns in this, and other particulars, have already been adverted to. But we must take them for the present as we find them, and do with them as best we can. Four stanzas, prominently embodying some one subject, or sentiment, or vein of emotion, is, in my own judgment, what we need in our church lyrics. The power of attention and of execution, on the part of the choir and the congregation, extends not much beyond this

limit. It must still be, then, the task of the clergyman to *form*, by selection, out of the long psalms and hymns in our collections, such shorter lyrics.

It is a very commendable custom in the Episcopal Church to sing but three verses of a hymn; the succeeding *Gloria Patri*, or "doxology," forming the fourth. Where a stanza has six or eight lines, *three* verses are certainly quite enough for the purposes of worship.

Now this might also be termed, in one sense, a "mutilation of hymns." But it is one which their inordinate length, in many cases, and their un-lyrical variety of subject, have rendered absolutely unavoidable.

If it be opposed to this, that David's psalms are long, and why should not our psalmody and hymnody be long,—it can readily be answered, that there is a vast difference between such rapidity of chanting, or musical recitation, as that to which these psalms were doubtless sung, and the tardiness of metrical music, like our church tunes.

For this very reason, I would urge again—let our psalms be chanted, in the original Bible language, and let our hymns alone be metrically sung.

CHAPTER XIII.

MUSICAL RHETORIC.

The musical consciences of our American choirs have become so tender of late years, that they cannot utter such words as *peace* and *rest*, and *sweet* and *repose*, above their breath. Singing with expression (so termed) has gone so far, that certain individual words seem to have attached to them a definite musical coloring: irrespective of their context; irrespective of the entire period which alone embodies the entire thought—which thought when completed, may involve a very different emotion from such individual words as *peace*, *rest*, *etc.* For instance, take the following stanza of a well-known hymn:—

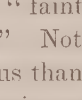
> "Sinners rejoice, and saints be glad,
> Hosanna, let His name be blest;
> A thousand blessings on His head,
> With peace, and joy, and glory rest."

The entire stanza, here, is evidently a jubilant one, and the individual word *peace* does not change its character. I once heard a choir singing this hymn, the leader of which had a powerful voice, and was singing with such strenuousness that the choir itself seemed to serve but as

a modest accompaniment to his solo. The singer, catching at such words as *rejoice*, *be glad*, etc., bounded exultingly on. But suddenly his eye fell upon the word *peace;* and this "gave him pause." He was startled, but with ready presence of mind he checked his musical career, and sinking his voice to a whispering *pianissimo*, faintly articulated the word—*peace*. This accomplished, however, he rallies manfully for the remainder of the line, to depict the *joy* and the *glory* of it.

And thus, in such phrases as "last, laboring breath," "the weary rest," "fainting heart," "sleep in dust," etc., our choirs musically *paint* the words. They faint on the "fainting heart," and expire on an "expiring breath." Nothing, it seems to me, can be more solemnly ludicrous than to hear a choir thus languish—and die.

Imitative effects, also, have been formally introduced into our choir music. In some of our hymn books we see a regular programme of dramatic imitation arranged side by side with the words of the hymns: like this for instance:—



"Thy words the raging winds control,
And rule the boisterous deep.
Thou mak'st the sleeping billows roll,
The rolling billows sleep."

In this verse, then, the choir, following the musical signs, have literally an oceanic task to perform. In the first line they must raise the raging billows, and then control them. In the second, they must raise the boisterous deep, (albeit, the sense indicates that it is ruled.) In the third line the billows are put asleep, (the sense supposes

the billows primarily asleep,) and then again aroused. In the fourth the waves are finally to be stilled. And all this is rehearsed to the Supreme Being, as a musical illustration to Him of the manner in which He accomplishes these wonders!

Another instance may be cited :—

> See the storm of vengeance gathering,
> O'er the path you dare to tread,
> Hark! the awful thunders rolling,
> Loud and louder o'er your head."

The gathering storm is here to be depicted—a spiritual storm is to be illustrated by a material. I remember as a boy how impressed I was by the dramatic effect of the heavy sub-bass pipes which the organist was in the habit of bringing to bear upon *rolling thunders*, until the church windows rattled again.

Now this hymn is intended as an earnest appeal to the erring soul. But, if the spiritual thunders of heaven be referred to, are we to hurl *material* thunders into his ear?

Even if dramatic effect alone were sought, would not an effective reader sink his voice to a whisper; and turn the listener's ear inward, to the thunder of his own conscience—rather than stun by material noise? If it comes to material dramatic effects, the machinery of the playhouse—that of rolling heavy weights over the ceiling—were far more effective, and truer to nature, than the rumbling of sub-bass pipes.

Singing with effect has thus grown into a great abuse in choirs: their meretricious laboring after expression,

by selecting certain isolated words, without reference to the context and the entire sense of the period—their fainting and rallying, sighing and expiring, are both rhetorically and musically preposterous.

But let us look, a moment, at this subject of expression, and endeavor to reduce it, if possible, to some degree of form.

Poetry and music may be said to have each a peculiar style of expression. Rhetorical expression might be termed *shading:* musical, *coloring*.

Shading, for instance, is the expression applied to a crayon sketch; or to a statue, where the chiselled features and the gentle swell of the concealed muscles cast their natural shadows. Coloring is the expression applied to an oil painting. One is an intensified form of the other.

Thus, musical expression is an intensified form of rhetorical.

The signs of musical expression are the f—ff—p—pp—mf—cres—dim—sfz—and other marks familiar to all. When such signs are applied in *vocal* music, the voices are treated, virtually, as instruments: for these are, strictly, more instrumental than vocal effects; they are produced on instruments with far greater ease than with the voice.

Rhetorical expression, on the other hand, is indicated only by the changing *sense*: and the voice of a good declaimer involuntarily follows the thought he is uttering, and takes its tone accordingly. It swells and falls, rises and sinks in intelligent cadence to the thought. Now, at times, in moments of great excitement, as when much is at stake, the voice of an orator will rise *through* rhetorical expression into musical. His voice becomes a mu-

sical instrument—the urgency of the moment forces the speaker into such vivid intensity of expression, that his voice actually *sings* with excitement.

But, if music and poetry have each a peculiar style of expression, the question arises—in a union of poetry and music, which style of expression shall be adopted?

In former chapters, on the treatment of words, we have shown that music may be made subordinate to poetry, or poetry to music: this subordination of the one or the other being shown by the treatment of the text at the hands of the composer.

The rule follows naturally, then, that—

Where music is subordinated to poetry, rhetorical expression most fitly appertains: but where poetry is subordinated to music, musical expression with equal fitness appertains.

This rule, then, can now be applied to sacred music. In a purely artistic style of church music, where impressive and ornamental effects are sought, and where, as has been shown, the words are, or may be subordinated to the tones, musical expression properly appertains. But in our devotions, music is necessarily subordinated to the words; and here, simple rhetorical expression is unquestionably alone befitting. For musical expression, from the difficulty of producing it, necessarily withdraws the mind from the sense: whereas, in our devotions, the mind should strictly be confined to the sense.

Therefore, in our devotional music, let us not try to make skillful instruments of our voices. Let us strive, rather, after a clear enunciation of the words. Let our minds be intently on the sense: and a befitting expres-

sion will involuntarily follow that sense, as the shadow follows the substance. Leave a more elaborate and ornamental coloring to the artistic style: and let our voices be toned down to the quiet level of devotion.

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In addition to what has already been said as to imitative and descriptive effects in music, a few general illustrations may well be added.

In a city, not a thousand miles from New-York, the Oratorio of the *Creation* was once performed by a musical society. In the course of this oratorio occurs the well-known passage, "And God said, let there be light;" in which, on the word *light*, a grand crash of instruments is brought to bear. Before commencing the chorus in which this passage occurs, the gas-lights in the hall, by means of the main-screw, had been half-dimmed. At this main-screw, (like the man at the bellows of an organ,) was placed an *operator*, between whom and the hall of performance a communication was established. At the critical moment, on the word "light," simultaneously with the crash of instruments, the operator turned vigorously, and a blinding flash of light electrified the audience.—The man at the screw proved himself an even more *dazzling* genius than the composer.

Again, in another city, Longfellow's beautiful poem *Excelsior* was performed. The cry of the youth, who bears the standard in ascending the mountain, was given in the composition by a single voice. This voice—that of a little girl in the present instance—was heard to come very faintly, from some unknown quarter. At last, however, the machinery of the effect was discovered:—the little

Miss was singing *Excelsior*, fainter and fainter, down a gradually-closed register, from the floor above!

Now, descriptive effects are often heard in the various departments of secular art, where, in skillful hands, and tastefully applied, they may be in place. An instance of this we find in the *Symphonia Eroica*. This symphony describes the career and death of a hero: and at the close of one of the movements, the last moments of the hero are musically painted: his song of victory becomes fainter, the melody is very skillfully interrupted, and heard, at last, only at intervals, in half inarticulate fragments, till a low, mournful sigh closes the scene. The effect is beautiful and impressive. It is also in place, and appropriate to the subject.

Again, in vocal music we have Beethoven's well known, exquisite song of *Adelaide*. Reference is made in this song to the nightingale: and in the instrumental accompaniment we hear the note of the sweet singer. In the Oratorio of the *Creation*, the music throughout is descriptive of the words: though these descriptive effects are more often given to the accompanying instruments than to voices. There is also much of this descriptive music in Beethoven's pastoral symphony, which he composed in a retired country place, in the open air, in the midst of beautiful scenery. You hear all rural and woodland sounds: among others, the sweet note of the cuckoo is distinctly audible.

These descriptive effects have also, (as is well known,) been introduced into poetry. The familiar lines of Virgil are of this character:—

"Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum."—*Aeneidos lib.* VIII. 595.

Here, the gallop of horses is distinctly recognised in the rhythm. In Richard Dana's beautiful poem, too, of the *Buccaneer*, occur these lines:—

> But when the light winds lie at rest,
> And on the glassy, heaving sea,
> The black duck, with her glossy breast,
> Sits, swinging silently—
> How beautiful! no ripples break the reach,
> And silvery waves go noiseless up the beach.

The swinging, swaying motion of the duck, and the gliding trip of the waves, are here beautifully depicted.

These are but single instances, both of music and poetry. There are many such to be found. But it will be remarked, first, that these effects are introduced mainly into the secular department of art; and even in case of the oratorio, have no connection with an act of devotion. And second, these effects *when* introduced, are done not only in good taste, and with a certain propriety of connection, but (which is still more important,) adequate *time* is taken to produce them. In the dying scene, for instance, in Beethoven's symphony, he does not compress the effect into a line of eight notes, (as is sometimes attempted by church choirs,) but he employs hundreds and thousands of notes—a long musical passage. He gives his hero, as it were, *time* to die.

A very frequent attempt in music, also, has been the painting of a thunder-storm, and the succeeding clear,

serene weather. Beethoven has done this in several instances. But here, again, he takes time for it: the storm gathers, and comes majestically on, with becoming deliberation and impressiveness. There is no attempt to raise, suddenly, raging winds and billows, as in the space of a hymn-line of eight metrical feet.

At best, however, this descriptive character of tones and words, seems to me to belong rather to a lower, than a higher order of artistic effect. It may justly be considered so, I think, in music. For in a case where mere natural sounds are imitated, (as in the instance mentioned of the cuckoo, in Beethoven's pastoral symphony,) the most you can say is, that Beethoven, for a moment, ceases to be Beethoven, to be—a cuckoo. And, in cuckoo music, the cuckoo herself is certainly the better musician of the two.

CHAPTER XIV.

SECULAR EFFECTS IN CHURCH MUSIC.

1. The sentimental, languishing effect.
2. The dance effect.
3. The rub-a-dub effect.

1. One of our American painters, a man of refined and quick sensibilities, once told me, that the music of a church in Connecticut he was in the habit of attending, was, for the most part, of so sentimental and languishing a character, that he habitually went forth, revelling in nothing but dreams of love and romance. He stated that this effect of the music upon him was irresistible—to the exclusion of all other desirable effects of service or sermon.

This can be understood by the musician. There is very much such music sung in our churches: music, which would better express the song "Oft in the Stilly Night," or "Meet me by Moonlight," than the sacred words to which it is applied. Such music is most often found adapted to penitential hymns; or such, generally, as embody the emotion of *sorrow*.

Now, we are too apt in music, (as, haply, in religion,) to mistake emotions. And as this mistake may oftenest

be made in the emotion here alluded to, it may be well to give it a moment's thought.

There is a vast difference between sorrow—and sorrow: between the sorrow befitting a penitential hymn, and that, for instance, which we experience in thwarted or disappointed love. For, reflect a moment. Is there no difference in the shadow which falls upon the soul under the frown of an offended Deity, and that which floats over it from the cloud that intercepts, momentarily, the moonlight of an earthly affection?—or the dreamy shadows which glide softly over it from those thousand fleeting clouds which arise in the heart's heaven; which come and go, we know not how, or whence; which form and dissolve, we hardly know by what agency; but which leave an impression wholly fleeting and evanescent?

What are the elements of this deeper, spiritual sorrow?

They are a sense of guilt; a feeling of ill-desert; a correspondent feeling of dread and deepest reverence before the offended Being; a certain painful turning-away of the soul from its sin and from itself—where originated the sin.

And what are the elements of the latter emotion?

A feeling of earthly regret; a tender, and to the heart, oft agreeable, melancholy; a certain sweet and cherished sentimentality of the heart, which loves even to believe that it *is* slightly unhappy.

The difference between the two, in a word, is that wide one, which characterizes all sorrowful emotion in which *conscience* bears a part—and in which it bears none.

From this marked difference, then, in the two emotions, there surely should be as marked a difference in the music

which expresses these emotions. The sentimental music-machinery—for there is such—should, here, never be brought into play. That languid style of composition; that continual suspension of the melody before the chords; that constant reiteration of the sentimental 3d, as heard in "Oft in the Stilly Night;" those excessive dynamic appliances of *piano*, *pianissimo*, *dim*, *cres.*, and similar peculiarities of a die-away style of music, should never have place in the penitential hymns of a church.

2. *The dance effect.*—Dance music is naturally addressed to the feet—the object being to set these in motion. This object is accomplished by certain definite musical appliances. The rhythm is of that lively, exciting quality, or of that wavy, swaying character, which almost necessarily induces the dance. The melody is of that light, airy, playful, bantering character, which produces a correspondingly airy and agreeable train of ideas, and puts the person in a dancing mood.

This is hardly a church effect: and yet we have, in a large class of our American psalm tunes, that peculiar tripping, triplet measure, which, although not quite up to the high pulse of our modern dance music, is yet an approximation to it: being, in fact, exactly the measure and exactly the time to which our parents and grand-parents used to thread their mazy dance in the old-fashioned minuet.

3. *The rub-a-dub effect.*—In military music the muscles are appealed to: but in rather a different manner to dance music. Here, antagonism is to be aroused. Consequently, a prompt, energetic style of rhythm is adopted: a series of surprises in the time is introduced. A so-

called syncopated style of measure is employed, by which the tones, themselves, seem to come into conflict, and clash with, each other. The effect upon the mind, as upon the muscles, is an exceedingly belligerent one.

This is surely not a church effect. And yet we frequently hear in our modern church music a march rhythm, which sets more than one impatient foot in motion and excites a military antagonism in the breast of the listener, not to be mistaken.

To such secular effects as these in our church music, we may, by habit, have become somewhat accustomed; but they are surely none the less objectionable on that account. Music is an insidious thing; and inasmuch as it does not appeal to the intellect, but to the senses, it is, to most persons, (like fragrance,) a very vague thing. But let us try to *intellectualize* this subject a little: to make it, at least, more definite, by transferring what has been done in music to other more tangible arts.

For instance, the military effect, as stated, has been introduced into our church music. Now in many churches we have pictures, on sacred subjects. Suppose, now, instead of this sacred subject, we have some subject corresponding with the military style in music—a picture of Mars, the God of War; with his helmet and pike and shield.

Again, the dance effect has been applied in church music. Suppose, therefore, a picture of Terpsichore, the goddess of the dance, crowned with laurel.

Sentimental and languishing effects have been applied. Suppose, as an altar-piece, Erato, the goddess of tender and amorous poetry, with a lyre in her right hand,

and a lute in her left: at her side a figure of Love, with his lighted flambeau.

All this would seem both inappropriate and profane. Yet, such pictures would act feebly, as compared with music. We should not *hear* the shout of the God of War, or the clash of shield and spear; nor would our blood, as in hearing, be kindled thereby. The ringing timbrel of Terpsichore would not seductively invite to the dance; neither would the voluptuous strains of Erato float to our ears, or Love wave the perfume of his torch to our senses. But music, unlike painting and unlike sculpture, is a living, breathing art. In the production of effect, whether secular or sacred,—and in appealing to the emotions, whether hallowed or unhallowed, we *hear her voice*—she lives before us!

The truth is, most of the music at present heard in our churches essentially differs from no *other* music: sacred and secular music are nearly identical—so far as *style* is concerned. Our psalm and hymn tunes are constructed on the form of the German popular part-songs. The old English glee has also served as a model. German convivial songs, soldiers' songs, students' songs, are actually found bodily transferred to our books of church psalmody, and are sung in our churches as sacred music. *Bekränzt mit Laub den lieben, vollen Becher*—Wreathe with green the flowing goblet—(a German convivial song,) is now enthusiastically rendered to sacred words. And, on the other hand, many American psalm tunes are of so essentially uproarious a character, that they might equally well be transferred to German *Kneipen*, and as ad-

mirably serve the purpose of these gatherings—so far as the music goes.

Now, the *effect* of music, after all, is what we have mainly to consider: and the only object of a so-called church-style of composition, is to exclude objectionable effects, and secure such effects as are solemn and church-like.

There was—once upon a time—a pure church style of music: strongly contradistinguished from the secular style. Just as we now have a sacred and secular style of painting and a sacred and secular style of sculpture, so we once had a sacred and secular style of music. The age of this pure, church school, is now passed—or passing. And yet, the old masters well understood the means—rhythmical and melodical—of avoiding such secular effects as those I have detailed. That interwoven style of composition—that equipoise of rhythm, forbidding too great a simultaneousness and regularly-recurring *ictus* of the parts, these, and other *arcana* of the art, are familiar to all thorough-bred musicians.

But this ancient style of composition, as was stated, is now, for the most part, rejected and handed over to the mould and dust of a bygone age. Chorals and counterpoint are at considerable discount in the modern church—albeit, here and there a sturdy contrapuntist still clings to his cherished ideal of the past.

Well—the pulse of the world beats faster than it used to do. It has a feverish throb in our day (at least in our country) which cannot suffer anything that is—even musically—*slow*. We have swung entirely loose from our musical church moorings, and, as when the courser

has taken the bit into his mouth, we must guide where we cannot restrain.

But let us at least understand, that the same music will not suit all purposes. Some music appeals to the muscles —and only to these. Some music appeals to the heels— and only to these. Some music appeals to the head, (like a coldly imaginative or learned music,) and some to the heart. Here, then, is a field of investigation for the musician. He must know what *kind* of music appeals to the heart, what *kind* to the head; what *kind* to the muscles or the heels:—in a word, what materials of his Art are to be used to produce, or to avoid, these effects. Briefly, he must know, so far as the materials of his Art go, how the more elevated part of our nature is to be appealed to, and how the less elevated.

But, added to this, the composer should have a clear *idea* of what he is about to express in his music. A joyous ascription of praise, or shout of thanksgiving, is not to be a convivial shout. Christian courage and spiritual ardor are not to be animal courage or military ardor. Spiritual love is not to be sensuous love: far less *sensual* —a quality we sometimes hear in Italian operatic music. Contrition and spiritual sorrow are not sentimental sorrow, or the feeble languishment of sighing melancholy.

In a word, the voice of the church, as heard in her solemn music, should be full of joy—but full of dignity. Full of tenderness—but full of manly depth. Full of sorrow and hearty contrition—but full of earnest strength. Full of love—but full of awe: and therefore utterly free from sentimentality and languishment.

Having said this, we can go no further, but leave the composer to his own instincts, to invent new forms—if he be able—adequately to fill the place of the old ones; ever bearing in mind, the while, that there are certain secular effects which are invariably to be excluded—that there are certain emotions and passions which are never to be awakened—that there are certain associations (as in the adaption of other music to church purposes,) which are never to be admitted. Remembering, also, that in the church, men are neither on parade, neither are they dancers, nor lovers, nor sentimentalists, nor dreamers: but that they are there for a *purpose*—and that a holy one.

Willis, Richard Storrs

Our Church Music